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HISTORIC MEMOIRS

OF

IRELAND;

COMPRISING

SECRET RECORDS

OF THE

NATIONAL CONVENTION, THE REBELLION,

AND

THE UNION;

WITH

DELINEATIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

CONNECTED WITH THESE TRANSACTIONS.

BY

SIR JONAH BARRINGTON,

MEMBER OF THE LATE IRISH PARLIAMENT
FOR THE CITIES OF TUAM AND CLOHER.

ILLUSTRATED WITH

CURIOUS LETTERS AND PAPERS IN FAC-SIMILE; AND NUMEROUS ORIGINAL PORTRAITS.

NEW EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

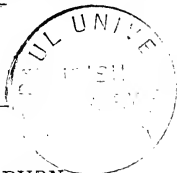
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SIR JONAH BARRINGTON, R.C.

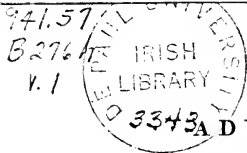
An Epitome of this work was published
by Sir John Barrington at Paris & entitled
"The Rise & Fall of the Irish Nation:-"

A.S.

Alexander Estewart

1. H. 76.

Lieut. R.N.



ADVERTISEMENT.

UNFORESEEN circumstances, over which the Author had no influence or controul, had altogether checked the progress of this Work, and suspended the publication of its latter parts.

This temporary relinquishment had given rise to unfounded and injurious reports of its suppression; an object which never was for one moment in the contemplation of the Author—nor sought for, nor even suggested by the Government of England.

On the contrary—the lamentable and unimproving march of Ireland, from the period of the Union, having fully proved the deceptive prospect given to that fatal measure by its mistaken or corrupt supporters, and having excited a novel interest and grave reflections of vital importance to the British Empire, the Author determined to seize upon the first available opportunity of fulfilling his engagement to the friends and patrons of the Work, by its completion.

Those friends were not confined to one party. They were mingled in all—they comprised several of the highest orders of society—many who held, and some who still hold, important stations in the Government of both countries;—and the commencing parts of the Work having been honoured by the approbation and encouragement of His late Majesty and other Members of His Royal House, it was with deep regret the Author, from a succession of causes, found himself unable to fulfil his intentions, and gratify his own ambition, by the completion of these Memoirs of the most important modern Historic events of Ireland. In many of those events he was himself a not unimportant actor. He possessed also the advantage of individual intimacy or acquaintance with the most celebrated personages of all parties; without which, and the fidelity of a contemporary and independent pen, the delineation of their characters, and the record of their conduct, if not lost for ever, and thereby leaving a wide chasm in a highly interesting epocha of British History, would have descended to posterity with imperfect details and an ambiguous authenticity.

The fallacious measure of a legislative Union—the progress of which from commencement to consummation the Author energetically resisted—has proved by its inoperative or mischievous results, the justness of that resistance; and he now, in common with many of the most distinguished of its original supporters, deeply deplores its accomplishment. But, established by lapse of time—confirmed by passive assent—and complicated with some beneficial, and many political and financial arrangements, its tranquil reversal seems to have passed feasibility. Yet—as an hereditary friend to British connexion—the Author hopes, by the revival and completion of this History, to open wide the eyes of Great Britain to the present dangers of Ireland; to draw aside the curtain of ignorance and prejudice by which her history has been so long obscured; to compare her once rising prosperity with her existing miseries; to discover the occult causes of their continuance, and the false principles of her misrule; to display her sacrifices for England; and to unmask her libellers in both countries.

Developments such as these may rouse the Legislature to probe her wounds to their depth—to employ her labour—to succour—to foster—and to rule her on the broad principles of a steady and philanthropic policy—and to relinquish for ever that system of coercive Government, which an experience of many centuries has proved to be destructive of almost every thing—except her crimes and her population.

The British people should also learn that the absence of the ancient Nobles and protecting Aristocracy of Ireland,—drawn away by the Union from the demesnes and their tenantry to the Seat of Legislation, and replaced only by the griping hands and arbitrary sway of upstart deputies,—increases in proportion with the miseries and turbulence of the lower orders; and that the luxuriance of vegetation which clothes that capable Island, has, through the same causes, become only a harbinger of want, or the forbidden fruit of a famished peasantry.

It should therefore be the object of every pen and of every tongue, to render the Union as innoxious as its paralyzing nature can now admit of; to recall the proprietors of the Irish soil to a sense of their own security and their country's welfare; and thereby strengthen the ties which should bind the two nations together, in equality, prosperity, and affection—on the firmness and durability of which *species* of connexion, depends, not only the constitutional security of England herself, but perhaps the political existence of both countries.

Such is the Author's view in the completion of this Work.

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ERRATA.

Page xxviii, line	3, for 14 January, read 20th January.
" 166, "	12, for 1799, read 1779.
" 235, "	11, (Note), for meeting, read mutiny.
" 246, "	5, for unnatural, read immaterial.
" 246, "	12, for George the Third, read George the First.
" 249, "	6, (Note), for 1802, read 1782.
" 259, "	21, for Henry Herd, read Henry Flood.
" 265, "	6, for Raly, read Daly.
" 272, "	8, for Rutland, read Portland.
" 296, "	23, for sober apartment, read sombre apartment.

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

IN compiling subjects of ancient history, and commenting on the most important events of remote revolutions, an author feels no personal interest, to warp his impartiality ; or party-prejudice, to mislead his judgment—he views the distant objects without passions or emotion,—his ambition seeks only to acquire reputation as an assiduous compiler, and credit as a faithful historian.—The style of his composition, and the accuracy of his statements, are the principal subjects of public criticism. —The transactions of the past are too remote to excite the feelings of the passing generation ; and the author's literary character receives ample justice, because nobody finds himself alluded to, or individually affected by any part of the publication. Not so with historians treating upon subjects—*recent*—momentous—and comprehensive,—on which many must have strong sensations—where *living* characters must be analyzed, and the conduct and motives of surviving actors be explored and developed.

Such a compilation will probably obtain friends by it's spirit—but is equally sure to make enemies by it's authenticity. Ancient history acquires repute and protection in proportion to it's truths, but the writings

of a contemporary often become obnoxious upon the very same principle—those who feel themselves hurt by the freedom of it's relations, most unreasonably blame the writer for exposing *facts*, when in justice they should blame only themselves as giving just cause for the exposure.

This will certainly be the fate of the following work.—And in publishing a History of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, the author performs the task with his mind fully sensible to all the dangers and disadvantages of the undertaking.—If such a work speak truths, it will displease—if it conceal them, it will disgust—and a middle course would be contemptible.—This Memoir, therefore, cannot give general satisfaction, and may excite considerable displeasure.—But a writer, who has the courage to descant upon the acts and characters of living men, must make up his mind patiently to submit to all that keen and cutting criticism, which a thousand tongues will be ever ready to inflict on the obtrusive publisher of *unwelcome* narratives.

The author of this work has certainly no reason to expect any partial exemption from these usual sufferings of contemporary biographers, and has therefore fully prepared himself with fortitude and perseverance, to bear him firmly through the whole scope of the performance.—If it shall be found to want merit, he will be amply punished by the sting of public reprehension—if it shall be deemed meritorious, it will have at least as many friends as enemies—time will efface the impressions against it, as time shall dispose of the persons who may feel them.—Critics must die—but books may live:—and whatever it's merits or demerits may be, this Memoir at one period or another, will receive dispassionate justice.

However, it is not to be denied, that a publication labouring under so serious an embarrassment should have cautious countervailing qualities, to place it as far as possible beyond the reach, not only of merited but even of plausible censure;—it's statements should be well-founded, and it's observations just.—Political censure should never descend to individual defamation, or the license of an historian lend itself to the invective of an opponent.—Public characters must be canvassed without *reserve*, and discussed without timidity—but private reputation should never receive a wound, unless inflicted by the hand of *public* profligacy.

Human nature has foibles and frailties,—men have passions and politicians propensities; and a charitable allowance should be made for all human infirmity.—Yet, while under these impressions, and with these moderate views and inclinations, the author is sedulously anxious to guard this Memoir from the imputation of *wanton* severity,—no scruples of mistaken delicacy shall turn him aside from those strong and well-founded observations, which the country so loudly calls for, and the subject so liberally affords.

This Memoir had been long since in very considerable progress, when the numerous disadvantages, connected with a publication of this nature at an early and passionate period, struck the author too forcibly to be resisted.—The Irish nation, sore from it's deep wounds, and alive to it's recent deprivations, was then most eager to receive any work, warmly descriptive of those misfortunes—the author himself might have been then intemperate through zeal, or inaccurate through ardour;—his work would then have been immatured by the calmness of reflection, and not equally authenti-

cated by the corroborations of proof,—it might, at that period, have been considered a mere pamphlet of the day—an ebullition of party—or a vehicle of invective—living only in the passions, and expiring in the apathy, of the moment.

Some of these imputations might then have had just weight, or would at least have struggled hard against that permanence of reputation, which a more deliberate and well-authenticated work, on so grand and interesting a subject, may have just reason to expect.—Many other important circumstances have since fully proved the discretion and advantage of this postponement—and many of those reasons are too obvious to escape remark, and too weighty to forego observation.

In depicting *living* characters, with which this Memoir must necessarily abound, the task of an historian is often invidious, and always difficult.—While animation remains, to feed the passions and frailties of nature, so long will the character of man remain susceptible of change—so long, a fluctuating spirit of mutability.

The chameleon does not oftener change it's hue, than the human disposition breaks out into novel and varying forms, as the defects and foibles of the mind are excited or wrought upon by the circumstances of the moment—as transitions from obscurity to elevation—from poverty to wealth—from depression to power, expose new traits of character, which the closest intimacy and unreserved friendship might have neither foreseen nor even suspected.

In modern Ireland, whence a great proportion of the higher orders have emigrated with the Parliament—and the ranks of society begin to draw closer together towards a centre of equality—the temporary rank

of *office* assumes the station of the hereditary aristocracy—and this observation becomes peculiarly applicable.

Nature seems to have endowed mankind with two characters, the one for humble, the other for elevated life.—Many can bear depression, but few can bear prosperity;—understandings, however strong, or talents, however splendid, are seldom proof against the intoxication of vanity, or the pride of successful ambition:—men, virtuous and amiable in retirement, may become corrupt and arrogant in power; and the biographer, who attempts accurately to depict the character of the *patriot*, will very imperfectly perform his task, unless he waits to see the subject become a *courtier*.

It is only therefore when the grave shall have closed upon the person of man, or the elevation of his sphere shall have taught him to forget himself, that the versatility of his character becomes decidedly obvious. Their *original* principles seem, in a few years, to have been altogether forgotten by some men;—by others, openly recanted;—by many occasionally varied;—and had this work been published immediately after the completion of the Union, the author, in giving to the public the *characters* of that period, would have deceived posterity, as he should *then* have been himself in many instances mistaken.

Another very peculiar advantage has attended the suspension of this work:—at an earlier period, though facts were believed, they were but imperfectly confirmed—men were cautious of *disclosures*, which might attach upon themselves, or involve the reputation of their relatives.

Corrupt acts, at the *first* moment of commission appear in all their deformity—the rewards of vice are dealt out as it were by the hands of a

monster, whose forbidding form gradually appears less hideous, as repetition accustoms man to behold him without shuddering;—till at length his favours are received without disgust, and his familiarity acknowledged without secrecy or compunction.

Privacy is the creature only of a few years;—as time passes away, communication comes forward—suspicions are converted into demonstration—*documents* get into the hands of strangers, and facts become divulged. —Such has been the case as to the subject of this Memoir—the postponement of its publication has been in this point invaluable, more especially as a deficiency of corroboration would be the strongest ground, to lessen its effect and impeach its character.

An objection will probably be made to this history, as connected with the political conduct of the individual who has undertaken it;—and the strong bias of his principles against the measure of Union will be plausibly urged, to discredit his historic impartiality in detailing the events of it.

It is true, the author of this Memoir took a very zealous and leading part in the Irish Parliament against that measure—he combated that enemy to the utmost of his power, and gave him the most decided opposition both within and without doors,—nor did he ever suppress the strongest expressions of dislike and of reprobation:—he therefore expects, to be represented as a prejudiced person—whose ears were hardly open to argument, or his mind to conviction:—and as the opinions *he* originally professed on that subject have never *changed*, but, on the contrary, have been *confirmed* by experience—it will reasonably be inferred, that a man, who has been so impressed by inveterate habit and confirmed principle, is

most unlikely to produce candid statements upon the subject matter of his strongest prepossession.

It may also be alleged—that his feelings as a partisan *must* affect his observations as an historian, rendering it nearly impossible to moderate his judgment, when he has already lost his political impartiality.*—The author feels the force and plausibility of these objections, and is prepared to meet them with all reasonable caution.

Nearly ten years have now elapsed, since the proposal for a Union was first announced to Ireland.—If calm judgment had at any time retired before national feeling, it has since returned, and resumed it's wonted station.—Reflection has strengthened the position of reason—the effect of implicit prejudice vanishes the moment an author becomes fully aware of it's danger; and the writer of this work fortunately knows enough of himself, and too much of the world, to plunge down a precipice, which lies so obvious and so open before him.

If on the other hand, with those impressions on his mind, he shall be found a faithful and not illiberal writer; if his observations shall be as just and as moderate, as can reasonably be expected from *his* view of the

* In the year 1799, Mr. Pitt edited a new edition of Daniel De Foe's history of the Scottish Union, (a most partial production,) in order to prepare the Irish people for a similar catastrophe—but the book had the very opposite effect from what was intended—every person who read it was fully convinced, that the relative state of Scotland with England in 1707—it's constitution, it's laws, and it's parliament, were altogether dissimilar from those of Ireland in 1799—and it clearly appeared, from the state of both countries in 1792, that Ireland had acquired more comparative prosperity in *ten years* of independence, than Scotland in *one hundred years* of Union.

subject ; he will deserve more favour than writers, who have neither strong feelings to restrain, nor prepossessions to counteract; and will have the double gratification of triumphing over the prejudices of other people, and of restraining his own.

The motives for reviving this important subject, after a lapse of several years, will probably be an object of curiosity, and certainly a matter of partial *animadversion*—the indiscretion, if not the danger of such a publication at this distracted period, will probably be urged against this Memoir by persons, who cannot conceal their *interest* in it's total *suppression*.

The author has well weighed the foundation and importance of such an objection;—and the more he has reflected, the more he has been convinced, not only of the propriety, but of the *imperative necessity* of at length awakening the British people, and the Imperial Parliament, to the critical state of Ireland, as yet by them imperfectly known, and more imperfectly comprehended; and to tell Englishmen, in *true* and *unequivocal* language, the capacities—the resources—and the character of Ireland—the sad story of her grievances—and the more lamentable history of her *annexation*;—and, by a manly and honest narrative, endeavour deeply to interest the Legislature in the vital concerns of this mismanaged and defrauded island—and call it's attention to an unparalleled example of maleadministration, by the contagion of which the fate of the united empire may ultimately be affected.

Since the accomplishment of the Union the state of Europe has assumed a position heretofore unknown—this moment is probably the most critical, and the most trying, the British empire ever experienced.

The English people have of late become mistrustful—and seem not warmly attached to any connected party:—the great contending leaders, who so long interested the empire in their struggles, are now no more;—their talents are lost to the country, and their stations remain *unoccupied* in the senate;—the people seem to regard what is termed the regular administration and the regular opposition without any very preponderating attachment—they respect *some* individuals connected with each, but seem to have no strong reliance on the *aggregate* of either.

In Ireland, the government is little more than nominal as to measures—eternally dragged, between *ascendency* and *emancipation*,* and, like an intoxicated man, staggering alternately from one side to the other, it keeps no steady footing or commanding attitude:—the Irish cabinet, from its nature temporising, is permanently perplexed, and the country is said to be dangerously disturbed,† without exciting even an inquiry into the

* The words *ascendency* and *emancipation* have definitions peculiar to Ireland—Protestant ascendency is used for *religious intolerance*—Catholic emancipation for *civil toleration*—the former word expresses *less* than it means—the latter *more*.—The speeches and writings of Sir Richard Musgrave and Lord Redesdale have defined the one—and a publication by Mr. William Parnell elucidates the other.

† Ireland is represented to Great Britain, as if in a state where the utmost severity of the law is inadequate to repress the *numerous* and *dreadful crimes* daily committed by the Irish.

The following accurate return of *all* persons convicted of *capital* and *transportable* offences in *all* Ireland, Dublin excepted, during the year 1807, will throw some light upon this subject.

Capitally convicted, 59—(seventeen of whom were for murder, many of them in *riots* among themselves,)—Transported, 50—for thefts, &c.—Total 109—being an average of about *two* convictions for every *hundred thousand inhabitants* of the country of Ireland.

Compare this with the population of England and number of it's convicts—also compare

remote causes of it's uneasiness, or suggesting any measures to effect it's tranquillity.

As to our interests connected with the Continent, the prospect is solemn and tremendous—an æra has arrived, unparalleled in the annals of the universe—all human foresight is baffled by events—the most profound theorist, deceived and confounded, despises his science—and feels the grounds of his most favoured speculations sink under his feet, by the pressure of some invisible weight, or the power of some mystic revolution.

Great nations subjugated almost without a struggle—and mighty empires created and transferred with less form than a manor in Great Britain—powerful monarchs appointed or deposed with as much ease, as the very worst minister could be gazetted or cashiered in England—that balance of power, on which the security of states so intimately depended, utterly annihilated by the overwhelming authority of one chieftain,—

the number of *murders* in each—and the *nature of crimes* in both, and there will remain little doubt, that Ireland is not the least virtuous part of the empire.

N.B. The mode of carrying on prosecutions in Ireland is through Crown Solicitors, appointed by government, and paid by bills of costs for each *distinct* prosecution.—They send a list of rogues and rioters to the Attorney General: if the rogues be bold and numerous, a special commission is occasionally sent down in the vacation, to despatch their cases—if there be *no emergency*, six crown solicitors, nearly forty barristers, and a sergeant, are ordered to prosecute them in the *usual* way.

A net sum of £2500 is annually granted upon estimate for apprehending, and £25000 for prosecuting the Irish, making together *twenty seven thousand five hundred pounds per annum*.

The respective Counties also pay the clerks of the crown for the indictments of *all* persons *acquitted*.

and all the political phenomena of former ages sunk into the rank of common occurrences, by a comparison with the wonderful events of our own.

The greater difficulty, therefore, in which a nation is involved—the more critical her situation—the more embarrassed her councils—and the more inefficient her ministers—the more imperative it is upon her, to investigate her own concerns with promptness, decision, and fortitude—to look deeply, stedfastly, and dispassionately, into the state of every important portion of her departments and her dependencies; and, before it is too late, apply *radical* remedies to radical defects; rather than deceive the world and herself by a course of delusive palliatives, unequal to the disease, and inapplicable to the constitution.

Ireland should be the *very first* object of British attention, and under *this* impression the author writes:—it is a mistake to suppose her tranquillity can be *permanently* secured by the presence of an armed force, or the severity of a special commission.—Little is the Irish character understood by those, who seriously make such assertions.—To ensure the tranquillity of Ireland, her wounds must be probed to their *depth*, and her disorders investigated to the *whole extent* of their symptoms.—*Every* cause of complaint should be explored to its *origin*, and *every* allegation of grievance or imposition be investigated and discussed—the accumulating and circumstantial charges of maleadministration during the agitation of the Union, which are daily casting deep shades of suspicion on every important measure since enacted as to Ireland, should be either *confirmed* or *refuted*.—Let the Irish nation be sure of British *justice*, and the British people may be sure of Irish *attachment*.

It will not be lost time to Great Britain, to cultivate the love of a brave, an enthusiastic, and a powerful people, upon the broad basis of equal rights and mutual affection.—But that blind and fatal principle of skimming over the affairs of Ireland with a light and giddy hand—a reluctant labour, and an invariable propensity to hasten a conclusion* of the *irksome* subject, will surely endanger the confidence of that people, and as surely risk the stability of the empire.

It is through the bosom of Ireland only, that Great Britain can receive her *mortal* wound; and Ireland is ready to interpose her body to the blow; but she must be armed by her affection, and shielded by her loyalty, or the penetrating weapon of their enemy may pierce both the protector and the protected.

To excite that *mutual* affection, and to secure a *voluntary* loyalty, should be the first labour of the Imperial Legislature:—this accomplished, the empire is invincible;—this neglected, it's existence is precarious.

The people of Great Britain have long been deceived with respect to the state of Ireland—the deception can last no longer—the crisis is arrived, and that country must be known—her real state should no longer

* Since the Union, it was conceived so laudable to shorten Irish discussions in the Imperial Parliament, that an Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, in one of his official speeches, apologized to the House for taking up their time upon Irish affairs—*But “hoped the House would do him the justice of admitting that he troubled them upon that subject as seldom as possible.”*

The same minister, to save time in stating fractions, absolutely opened the Irish budget in *round numbers*—but it being discovered by the sagacity of some English members, that this applied to the consolidated fund of *both* countries, the Right Hon. Gentleman was obliged to discontinue the practice.

be accredited from the mere assertions of a minister,—or her dearest interests decided by a question of adjournment—the consideration of her case has become identified with the security of the empire; and every subject, who regards that security, and loves the connexion, should lend all their efforts to protect it from danger so imminent and so extensive.

The Union between Great Britain and Ireland, though alleged to have been enacted for the purpose of securing the tranquillity of the empire and the consolidation of it's resources, does not appear as yet to have effected any of those extraordinary advantages, which were looked to from it's adoption; and after nearly ten years of trial, it's success has completely failed—one country is doubtful of it's utility—the other certain of it's mischiefs:—the loss of a resident parliament becomes every day more severely injurious to Ireland:—and, even defective as it was, it's absence is deplored by the nation as the departure of an old friend, or the death of a protecting patron.

With the incidents of this measure England is as yet totally unacquainted.—She knows, that a Union has been effected, acted upon, and established; yet it's occult causes remain unascertained, and it's consequences uninvestigated by the British people.

Nothing but an unreserved and honest history of that vitious measure can turn the eyes of Great Britain to the true state of Ireland; either as to the sources of it's disquietude, or the defects of it's constitution.

To undeceive the English people, therefore, with respect to the critical state of Ireland, is one great object of this Memoir: and if a full consideration and effective inquiry into her grievances, as they affect the

character and safety of the British empire, shall be the result of the author's labours; he will be gratified in the consideration, that he shall have accomplished the highest service to his country, to his king, and to that empire, which moderate talents and limited capacity could possibly effect.

The high offices the author holds—the favours he has gratefully received from the crown—the hereditary attachment of his family to the legitimate constitution of their country, and his being altogether unconnected with, and uninfluenced by, any political or religious party whatever, place him far beyond the suspicion of exciting factious agitation, or indulging theoretic propensities;—and proud in these sentiments of affection for the king he serves, and the country in which he resides, he considers the prosecution of this work as a duty paramount to all public considerations; and will steadily proceed on a subject, which, if it shall fortunately catch the attention of the legislature, may save a nation, and preserve an empire.

That difficult and comprehensive question of Catholic claim, which has so long agitated the Irish people, and is likely still further to occupy their most anxious attention, necessarily becomes a leading and implicated incident in the progress of this Memoir.

The culpable and deceptive intercourse of the Catholic leaders with Marquis Cornwallis, in 1799 and 1800—their unbounded credulity, and his unbounded dissimulation,*—form a remarkable and interesting

* The late Earl Landaff, who had no great esteem for Marquis Cornwallis during the latter part of his administration in Ireland, and had at one time determined to measure

episode of Irish history.—The Catholic cause has been badly conducted in both countries—and bandied about rather as the shuttlecock of a party, than treated as a vital subject of constitutional and fundamental importance;—one day brandished as a weapon for the people—the next employed as an instrument for the minister.

A popular subject thus argued without effect, and discussed without decision, can only promote public suspense—the most injurious of all states to the tranquillity of a country.

The conduct of the Catholics themselves occasionally exhibits the most feeble and inconsistent policy—a great body of the people delegating aristocratic leaders to superintend popular claims; and committing it's independent resolves to the guardianship of subservient courtiers.

Nothing could induce the author, to decline passing the severest strictures on the weak and criminal conduct of some distinguished leaders of that body, during the discussion of the Union; save a reflection, that the sins of a few weak-minded proselytes might attach to a body of men, who, in general, stood as patriotically firm and decided, as intimidation, influence, and corruption, would permit them.

swords with his Lordship, made a very curious physiognomic remark upon the Marquis's countenance, as being the best adapted to *diplomatic* purposes of any yet invented by nature.

Marquis Cornwallis was a very comely soldierlike man—but his eyes and the opposite sides of his face were extremely dissimilar in contour and character.

The Earl used to remark of the Marquis, that whenever his Excellency negotiated with a *fool* he very skilfully used only one of his profiles;—and when he was in the act of treating with a *knave*, he always turned the other—and that both were admirably adapted to the purposes he employed them in.

It is proper, however, that those, who acted upon that occasion with *culpable* imbecility, should be recorded by their *own acts*; and that the body of the Irish population, who now seek to be received into a full and fair participation of the rights and benefits of the common constitution, should learn, by the fatal errors of the past, through what men, and by what measures, to regulate the consistency of their future conduct.

It is impossible the question entitled Catholic Emancipation can long remain in abeyance, a theme for contending parties, and a query on the journals of the legislature;—the expediency of a final decision on that measure becomes every day more necessary and more apparent; but, whatever this decision may be, the Catholics have as little reason to praise the discretion of some of their own partisans, as the Protestants have to celebrate the literary productions of theirs;* and however the Catholic cause may have derived great *advantage*, and gained considerable *credit*, by the letters attributed to the Right Honourable Lord Redes-

* The versatility of opinion in great men has been illustrated by two great personages of high consideration in Ireland, viz. Lord Redesdale, and Doctor Lanagan, the titular bishop of Kilkenny.

It will be read with admiration, that the correspondent of the Earl of Fingal is the identical Lord Redesdale, who some time before had received a valuable compliment from the Catholics, as a reward for his *tolerating* principles; and that the prelate who, in 1779, addressed his Excellency Marquis Cornwallis, to present the *supremacy* of Ireland *altogether* to Great Britain, is the identical Bishop Lanagan, who has since become so zealous a stickler for the *supremacy* of the *Pope* over the same island, by his celebrated reasons against giving his Majesty the *veto*.

dale,* the services of his Lordship have lost half their effect, and all their novelty, by the commensurate *liberality* of the Right Rev. Bishop Lanagan.

This question has now become so interwoven with the affairs of Ireland, as to be altogether inseparable from their consideration; and the author has said thus much on this subject, as the communications made to him of the *private* transactions upon that question with the Marquis Cornwallis and his secretary have induced him to hesitate as to the course, in which so delicate a subject should be communicated to the public, and which he is reluctant to state in the detail, without the most full and unquestionable authentication of every part of it.

The history of the rise and fall of any nation—the prosperity, or the depression of any country—must include many important subjects, and

* The *first* set of Lord Redesdale's letters to the Earl of Fingal (being addressed to him as from a Lord Chancellor to a *Justice of Peace*) was published in Dublin, and as it treated much of *spiritual* concerns, was bound up with his celebrated Epistle to Dr. Coppinger, and created no trifling sensation among the proscribed Catholics.—However, that set was quite eclipsed by a *second* set of four more letters, written by Lord Redesdale to the same Earl:—These were about to be also published, but were suppressed through the interposition of Mr. William Bellew.

This has been considered a peculiar public loss, as they contained some most edifying strictures on Test Oaths—the Union—Catholic Claim—the Pope—the Pretender—Doctor Coppinger—Doctor Fray—Doctor Duigenan (by implication), &c.

The first set is about to be published, with annotations;—it is thought the second set will also come out—at least some extracts from these letters, of a most interesting description, are in circulation.

involve many distinguished characters. From the year 1779, Ireland has undergone vicissitudes, which no nation ever yet experienced under the reign of one monarch; hardly under one dynasty.—She has within that space of time produced more public talent, than any country (save France) ever brought forward in the same period, and has been oftener on the brink of total revolution, than any country that ever escaped it. Public virtue and public corruption have reached their extremes in Ireland; the patriotism of Cato, and the profligacy of Walpole,* might have found their parallels in that island.

The Irish have ever been a people of the strongest sensibility—they adopt no middle course; and never did there exist men, in whose feelings—whose conduct—and whose principles, is to be found less mediocrity, than among the inhabitants of this mismanaged island.

* In Sir Robert Walpole's posthumous letters to a friend, he gives a very instructive picture of a skilful minister, and a condescending parliament:—

“My dear Friend,” writes Sir Robert, “there is scarcely a member, whose price I do not know to a sixpence, and whose very soul almost I could not purchase at the first offer.—The reason former ministers have been deceived in this matter is evident, they never considered the temper of the people they had to deal with.—I have known a minister so weak, as to offer an avaricious old rascal a star and garter—and attempt to bribe a young rogue, who set no value upon money, with a lucrative employment.—I pursue methods as opposite as the poles, and therefore *my* administration has been attended with a very different effect.”

During the discussion of the Union, when Marquis Cornwallis's administration had been, in the course of debate, pointedly charged by Mr. William Plunkett, afterward Attorney General of Ireland, with acts of gross corruption, Lord De Blacquire (then Sir John) defended Lord Castlereagh, the Irish Secretary, by a most oracular assertion—he assured the house, that “the noble young Lord *did not know how to bribe.*”

Ireland, in fact, continued virtually a nation but for eighteen years:—she regained her independence, through the energies of her people, in 1782; and she lost it, by the seduction of her representatives, in 1800. The transactions of that interval will constitute the principal body of this Memoir—those which precede it are introductory—those which follow it are illustrative.

It may be conceived by persons not in the habit of exercising their judgments, that the subject of this Memoir is appropriated *exclusively* to the affairs of Ireland, and is a matter of very remote interest from the immediate concerns of Great Britain. This conception is radically erroneous.

Whatever materially affects Ireland as a country, must *necessarily*, either more or less, operate upon the interests and safety of England—the relative connexion of the two countries creates a political sympathy between them, which must continue so long as the same sceptre governs both nations; and this position must be known and received as orthodox, before the constitution or complicated interests of either country can be duly comprehended.

Political writers on the public affairs of Ireland, however fair their objects, or reasonable their doctrine, will find all their labour fruitless and ineffectual, unless they are enabled by their reasoning to prove that, the prosperity of Ireland is not merely *local*, but is directly connected with the important concerns and substantial interests of *Great Britain*.

The doubt of this position is a natural result from the commercial habits and education of the English people; and it is proper, that their minds should be enlightened by fair statements, and their understandings

convinced by just and conclusive argument, before they should be called upon *implicitly* to believe, that the interest of Ireland is in *fact* the real interest of Great Britain—and that the advantages Ireland would receive by the most liberal concessions to her commerce, her manufactures, and her constitution, nay even by the restoration of her parliament, would ultimately increase the wealth and the power of Great Britain; and tie that effectual knot, by which alone the sincere attachment and combined resources of the two countries can ever be permanently bound together, or by which they can be brought to act with undiminished force against the arts or the power of a common enemy.

The statements of this history will convince England of the dangers she may be exposed to, by a perseverance in that infatuated system, which she has so long and so injudiciously adopted toward the Irish people.

France was revolutionized by the principles of liberty, which she imbibed in America—England might be ruined by those of corruption, which she countenanced in Ireland.—If the people of Great Britain will look with a calm and scrutinizing attention to the internal incidents of their *own* country, they will clearly discover, that the germe of political profligacy, which had been so liberally propagated in Ireland, has been imported with the Union, and is rapidly vegetating in the prolific soil of England, under the care and superintendence of the very same agriculturist.

The *comparatively* trivial deviation from the principles of the constitution, which avowed itself in the transactions between Lord Castlereagh, Lord Clancarty, and Mr. Redding, made a strong impression on the public mind—and a considerable one on the Imperial Parliament—but when

the people of England shall learn by this Memoir, that this abuse of power and of confidence, which they consider so ominous to their liberty, was only *attempted* by the same minister, whom they themselves had instructed to buy up the independence of Ireland by the same means—then, and not till then, they will be convinced, that they have hardly a right to condemn the noble Lord for his *disposition* to carry on in their *own* country the same unconstitutional traffick, which they had given him unrestrained and unlimited authority to practise in *ours*. And when Great Britain shall further learn by this Memoir, that she had authorised her ministers to prostitute two millions of Irish money, publicly to purchase the representation and representatives of the Irish nation—to barter the dignity of the Lords for the privilege of the Commons—to reward seven members of the Irish Parliament, who had supported the Union, by placing them as judges in the superior courts of justice in Ireland *—to dismiss the most faithful servants of the King, because they were

* There are but *twelve* judges in the superior courts in Ireland—of this number *seven* members of the House of Commons, who voted for the Union, were (on it's completion) placed on the bench of justice in Ireland.—These gentlemen are, Mr. Toler (Lord Norbury)—Mr. St. George Daly—Mr. Osburne—Mr. Johnson—Mr. Fox—and Mr. Baron M'Clelland—(the detail of these appointments will be found in the course of this work).

It is somewhat remarkable, that these gentlemen were scarcely seated on the bench, when nearly *one third* of them were *taken* over to be tried in London—one at the bar of the King's Bench, another at that of the House of Lords:—the former was found guilty—the latter (Mr. Justice Fox) escaped (though narrowly), very *fortunately* for Ireland, as well as for himself—as he is one of the most *able* and *honest* judges, which any country has produced—though it is not supposed, that Marquis Cornwallis selected him for *these* qualifications.

honest, and elevate the most inveterate opposers of his government, because they were corrupt—to disfranchise two hundred of the Peers, and cashier two hundred of the Commons—and that when the work had been completed, the royal standard was hoisted, and the Tower and Park guns of London were fired, in celebration of the achievement—can she then blame the noble Lord for practising her own lessons, in which he had for her *own purposes* been so skilfully instructed? Or is there any just reason to expect, that the noble Lord would so soon relinquish the advantage of his political education, and protect the liberties of another country, when she had so successfully instructed him how to betray the liberties of his own? If misfortunes, therefore, should befall that nation from the practices of corruption, she must blame the consequence of the precedent, which she had herself established.

The author of this work admits the singularity of his own principles, which may probably embarrass his writings with whimsical remarks and fanciful observations: and he admits, that singularity in public persons is an error of considerable magnitude, for it differs from every body. The author however conceives he should be a very insincere friend to both countries, if any personal consideration should either tempt or intimidate him from that decided line, which he has adopted as the basis of this Memoir.

General assertions will never convince—every person, who intends either to instruct or reform, must always have in proof facts either of public notoriety, or of private information. It would be rather a difficult undertaking, to convince a people, that they are in a state of profound *ignorance* upon a subject, which they thought they were acquainted

with—and to persuade them that they were *receiving* favours, when they thought they were *conferring* them—yet this is literally the case of England with respect to the Irish Union.

If the English nation were exactly of that temper and disposition, which it certainly is represented and generally believed to be by the Irish, the author of this work would expect very little success from an effort to undeceive it; but he has, from his intercourse in England, seen with the greatest and most gratifying satisfaction a *growing* disposition among the *enlightened* English, to listen with attention and consider with *liberality* the affairs of Ireland—and in many instances this disposition has manifested itself in the Imperial Parliament. But so little effort has been made by the *Irish* representatives to dispel that mist, which has so long obscured a clear prospect of their own country—that the author has no doubt, the effort of an Irish gentleman, intending to benefit Great Britain by serving Ireland, will be received in good part by the British people: and while they feel the motive, they will pardon the presumption.

It is right however, that a person, professing himself to be the compiler of a Memoir of most important events, should himself be known, particularly as to his political tenets.

The author's long and busy course as a public man would render an introduction of this nature almost unnecessary; but the suspension of his active conduct as a *political* character, for nearly ten years, may render a reavowal of his public principles at this day not only judicious, but a proper, perhaps a necessary candour toward those, who may favour his work with their attention, and may not have been previously acquainted with his character.

This part of the task cannot be more fairly performed, than by declaring, that his political opinions remain decidedly and unequivocally the same, as on the 20th of January, 1799, when he made a public and printed declaration of those opinions in a letter to Mr. Saurin, the sentiments of which he now repeats and adopts. That letter was certainly the result of warm feelings, and was written on the impulse of the moment—but has since been approved of by his most cool and deliberate judgment.*

In the sentiments of that letter the author feels himself strengthened by the authority of Mr. Saurin, now Attorney General of Ireland, who went at least the same length in his conduct upon the question of Union †—and as that letter may also give an idea of the zeal of the times—the objects of the Government, and the conduct of the Viceroy, it may be looked upon as something of a general argument to the work, and the author in this point of view offers it to the perusal and observation of the reader.

* This letter was noticed and commented on by Lord Glenbervie, in his speech upon the Union in the British Parliament.

† Sir William Smith (made a Baron of the Exchequer after the Union) published a *pamphlet* in answer to Mr. Saurin's *speech*; they are both very good performances in their way, and will be touched on in the progress of this Memoir.—The point in controversy was the *incompetency* of the Irish Parliament to *pass* a bill of *Union*.

“ MERRION SQUARE, *January 20th, 1799.*

“ Permit me to resign, through you, the commission which I
 “ hold in the Lawyers’ Cavalry:—I resign it with the regret of a soldier, who
 “ knows his duty to his King, yet feels his duty to his Country, and will depart
 “ from neither but with his life.

“ That blind and fatal measure proposed by the Irish Govern-
 “ ment, to extinguish the political existence of Ireland—to surrender it’s legislature,
 “ it’s trade, it’s dearest rights and proudest prerogatives, into the hands of a British
 “ minister, and a British council ; savours too much of that *foreign* principle, against
 “ the prevailing influence of which the united powers of Great Britain and Ireland
 “ are this moment *combating*—and as evidently throws open to the British empire
 “ the gate of that seductive political *innovation*, which has already proved the grave
 “ of half the governments of Europe.

“ Consistent therefore with my loyalty and my oath, I can no
 “ longer continue subject to the indefinite and unforeseen commands of a military
 “ government, which so madly hazards the integrity of the British empire, and
 “ existence of the British constitution, to crush a rising nation, and aggrandize a
 “ despotic minister.

“ Blinded by my zealous and hereditary attachment to the
 “ established government and British connexion, I saw not the absolute necessity of
 “ national unanimity, to secure constitutional freedom—I see it now, and trust it is
 “ not yet too late to establish both.

“ I never will abet a now developed system treacherous and
 “ ungrateful—stimulating two sects against each other, to enfeeble *both*, and then
 “ making religious feuds a pretext for political slavery.

“ Rejecting the experiment of a reform, and recommending the
“ experiment of a revolution.

“ Kindling catholic expectation to a blaze—and then extin-
“ guishing it for ever.

“ Alternately disgusting the rebel and the royalist by indiscri-
“ minate pardon, and indiscriminate punishment.

“ Suspending one code of laws, and adjudging by another,
“ without authority to do either; and when the country, wearied by her struggles
“ for her King, slumbers to refresh and to regain her vigour—her liberty is
“ treacherously attempted to be bound—and her pride, her security, and her inde-
“ pendence, are to be buried alive in the tomb of national annihilation.

“ Mechanical obedience is the duty of a soldier—but active
“ uninfluenced integrity the indispensable attribute of a legislator, when the preser-
“ vation of his country is in question—and as the same frantic authority which medi-
“ tates our *civil* annihilation, might in the same frenzy meditate *military* projects,
“ from which my feelings—my principles—and my honor might revolt—I feel it
“ right to separate my civil and military functions; and to secure the honest unin-
“ terrupted exercise of the one, I relinquish the indefinite subjection of the other.

“ I return the arms I received from Government*—I received
“ them pure, and restore them not dishonoured.

“ I shall now resume my civil duties with zeal and with energy
“ —elevated by the hope that the Irish Parliament, true to itself, and honest to it's

* Mr. Saurin, as Captain Commandant, some time after convened a meeting of the whole corps, and proposed to them to lay down their arms;—a Mr. Daly opposed it (he has been since appointed a Baron of the Exchequer)—(*vide Post*); and Mr. Saurin soon after resigned his commission, and was followed by Captain Spencer of the cavalry, and many of the members.

“ country, will never assume a power *extrinsic of it's delegation*—and will convince
 “ the British nation, that we are a people equally impregnable to the attacks of
 “ *intimidation*, or the shameless practice of corruption.

“ Yours, &c.

“ JONAH BARRINGTON,

“ To WILLIAM SAURIN, Esq.

“ *Lieut. L. Cavalry.*”

“ *Commandant Lawyers' Corps.*”

The opinion of the author as to a Legislative Union is not *newly* adopted. He has ever considered that measure as more likely to estrange, than to connect the two nations. From the days of his early youth, down to those of his maturer years, this sentiment has never ceased to actuate his mind, and impress itself upon his understanding—at all times and in all capacities—under every government, and every circumstance—his opinion upon this subject has remained unaltered. He became a member of the Irish Parliament, unconnected either with a party, or with a patron; and from choice and principle he supported the King's government during momentous times, and in the most difficult and embarrassing situations—nor did he separate himself from that government, until it had shown an evident determination to separate itself from what he conceived to be the vital interests of his country. He therefore feels much gratification in observing, that a great proportion of those distinguished persons, whose political conduct had been unfortunately misguided by erroneous judgment, the lures of avarice, or the phantom of ambition, have since been convinced of the inefficiency and mischiefs of the Union; and now turn with disgust from a retrospect of

their own conduct, again cultivating that proved national spirit, which it had been happy for their country, that they had never abandoned.

The author cannot now forbear from making some observations as to that course, which the politics of England have taken, and which must ultimately affect Ireland through the medium of that species of connexion, which at present subsists between the two nations.

England, where the principles of freedom are better understood and better protected than in any other country under Heaven, though she herself possesses a redundancy of constitutional liberty, still loves to monopolize it, and lend it out to her dependencies with jealousy and with reluctance. Even in the most corrupt times since the Revolution, England preserved her *own* liberties entire; and though the administration might be profligate, yet the voice of the people was ever predominant.—The corruption of a British minister in general extended only to jobbing measures or financial deception—but if he *dared* to encroach upon the invaluable liberties and inherent rights of the nation, or to interfere with a protecting principle of the constitution, he surely lost his power, and as surely his friends; and when he found the confidence of Parliament withdrawn from him even in a single instance, he hardly ever presumed to give it a second opportunity of expressing its disapprobation.

But now, though a minister may be one day disgraced by a decision of Parliament, yet he comes forward the next with redoubled confidence, arrogantly *demanding* its support, and requiring its acquiescence; and presumes to defend the unconstitutional acts, of which he had himself been guilty, by asserting that *worse* acts had been committed by some

of his *predecessors*—thus literally claiming a right to be vitious by *prescription*—yet this claim seems to have been lately in some instances *practically* admitted, and the possession of high ministerial office is now held to be perfectly compatible with the loss of public confidence—a dangerous position—on which the Crown and the Parliament might be mischievously committed, and those who affect to reform the state might be led indirectly to assail the prerogative, which has been artfully and intimately blended with the protection of the Minister.

This bold proceeding also subjects the executive power to unconstitutional restraints; and though a recent and most painful event has fully proved that the Crown is *not* too strong for the *people*, yet it has also proved, that the Oligarchy is too strong for either; and that Ministers may place themselves in impregnable stations, unacknowledged by the theory and principles of the British constitution. Every party seems to plunge into some dangerous error:—the Minister, to throw an odium upon the principles of Opposition, endeavours to confound the reform of abuse with danger of revolution; the Opposition, to embarrass the Minister, indiscriminately obstructs every measure of the Government; while a third party, professing a thorough *contempt* for both, perpetually declaims on the necessity of doing, without reflecting whether they be not doing mischief.

Thus there appears a general absence of that deep, regenerating, vigorous wisdom, by which alone states can be preserved, or constitutions perpetuated. The qualities of good government are passed by in the animosity of conflicting factions—and the local interests of Ireland, for the discussion of which

her own Parliament was peculiarly adapted, are now necessarily swallowed up in the grand vortex of imperial litigation.

Even the language of the contending parties is of a nature repulsive to the essential interests of the empire, and the safest principles of legitimate administration. The matter and tone of a Minister would justify a supposition, that the Crown *can* have an interest *distinct* from the people;—that of the Opposition seems to infer, that the people *have* an interest distinct from the Crown;—doctrines equally and evidently repugnant to the very nature of a limited monarchy, and which, if carried much further, would become the strongest auxiliary to the arguments of extravagant reformists, and the dangers of indefinite reformation. The example of historic events has proved, that this language of distinctness, generating a want of mutual confidence between the Crown and the people, has often been the origin of anarchy and revolution. Yet in England, even with example before their eyes, those parties, who most zealously contend for the exclusive honor of preserving the state, perpetually contribute by their respective declamations to the very first step towards its dissolution.

Thus the first maxim of good government—namely, to attach the people, not only to the *man* that wears the crown, but to the *crown* he wears—seems to be forgotten: and if the murmurs of the English people can be kept from the foot of the throne, a British Minister conceives, that he has performed his duty to the mother country, and trusts to the exertions of the military for governing the residue of the empire.

This dangerous conduct of parties in England attaches peculiarly to the interest and safety of Ireland. The critical situation of Europe, the accumulating difficulties Great Britain labours under, and the uneasiness of Ireland herself, have now rendered some change of measures indispensably necessary to the prosperity, if not to the security, of the empire.

Should overwhelming numbers at length effectually crush those distracted nations which we vainly call our allies, Great Britain may then have her battles to fight on her own plains, and on the united energies of her people only can she rely for victory. It should therefore be considered, that Ireland is in many respects more *critically* situate than Great Britain—she is not only more easily assailable from her geographical position, but, when assailed, more vulnerable by her internal disunion. She should therefore be defended not only by the power of a regular force, but by the arms of a loyal and contented population:—her people should have as much as possible to fight for, and they will best understand the inestimable value of the British constitution by substantially partaking in all it's rights, and all it's advantages.

But at such a period as the present, when the shouts of approaching war may be heard even to our own shores, any Minister, who, through a narrow prejudice or supercilious obstinacy, should decline or neglect to take measures the most likely to cement all the people into one bulwark of strength against the common enemy, will be guilty of a high crime against the empire:—and if he should wantonly irritate a people by taunting jeers, and neglected *representations*; if he should resist constitutional and legislative inquiry into the *causes* of their misery,

and the *source* of their dissatisfaction; and if the consequence of such neglect and resistance should be the *alienation* of any portion of the King's subjects; such Minister will have to answer with his head for his treason.

Great Britain should also recollect, that the profusion of public money, which the conduct of continental wars draws from the united treasury, is now pressing so heavily upon Ireland, that the sum at present demanded from her towards supporting the *army* alone amounts to nearly the *whole* of her ordinary revenue.—In consequence of the Union, two seventeenths of all sums, which Great Britain expends on continental powers and foreign subsidies, are to be furnished by the Irish people, to whom *no* part of that expenditure ever *returns*.—And now that it has become habitual to Great Britain, to subsidize not only *mendicant* states but powerful *empires*, the united wealth of Great Britain and of Ireland is daily transmitted by ship-loads to every nation of the world, that assumes the character even of a *temporary* ally, though with almost the certainty of becoming an eventual enemy.

Ireland is thus called upon to provide a considerable proportion of all those millions, which every British Minister may think proper to lavish on foreign states; though the twentieth part of those subsidies, if granted to Ireland *herself*, would raise her to the highest pitch of domestic prosperity.

With means to assist in the encouragement of her manufactures, to facilitate her foreign commerce, to improve her ports, to intersect her mountains with roads, and her vallies with canals, to improve and cultivate the minds and morals of her people by appropriate education,

to promote their industry by public institutions, and to complete her happiness by purchasing up the heaviest of *all* her grievances—tithes,* Ireland, by an energetic and willing cooperation, would contribute more

* Upon a late debate on Mr. Henry Parnell's motion for a committee to "*inquire into the collection of tithes in Ireland*," the present Irish Chief Secretary, Mr. Dundas, (not having as yet been in that country,) observed, "that he did *not* conceive such information *necessary* ; " and the more *especially*, as it would be only holding out *fallacious hopes* to the Irish people, "which, for *obvious* reasons, could *not* be *gratified*."—It is not tithes in the *abstract*, but the mode of *collecting* them, which is the great grievance, and which has been the *origin* of almost every partial disturbance in Ireland during the last *fifty* years.

The following mode of collecting tithes in parts of the county Mayo, Sligo, &c. being those very *parishes* and *districts* where the *French* army under General Humbert was so *cordially* received by the unfortunate peasantry in 1803, may give Mr. Dundas some idea of the propriety of his observation.

The protestant clergyman generally lets his tithes to a proctor, or farmer ; the wealthy parishioners rent *theirs* from the proctor upon *reasonable* terms, which prevents their interference. The remaining tithes of the parish, being those of the peasants, are then advertised to be *canted* (a sort of auction) at some alehouse : the bidding commences at *night*, frequently so late as eleven or twelve o'clock :—the proctor (and in *some* instances the rector) superintends the sale ; each cottager's tithe is set up distinctly, and every bidder, according to the liberality of his *advance*, gets a glass or two of strong whiskey, to *encourage* him : the cottager's pride to purchase his own tithe increases with his inebriety ; puffers are introduced ; the sale raised ; and, when the cottager is at length declared the buyer, a promissory note is drawn *for* him ; he, being *totally illiterate*, puts his *mark* to it, and when he awakens next day from his intoxication, he is informed of the nature of his purchase. This *cant* generally lasts several *nights*. The cottager (if not *punctual*) is then served with a law process, called a civil bill, for the amount of the note ; a decree, with *costs*, of course, issues

towards preserving the British empire, than England can ever accomplish by profusely squandering her millions on those distracted countries, which she can only call her allies until some decisive battle, or some

against him; and the blanket (his children's covering), or the potatoes (his *only* food), are sold to pay the expenses of the proceeding.—The attorney and proctor understand each other, the costs of recovering a *crown* often exceeding a *guinea*;—and the Catholic peasant, instead of a *tenth*, frequently yields up the *whole* of his scanty, miserable crop, to support a pastor of the protestant establishment.

Unable either to bear or counteract the oppressions of tithe proctors, the beggared peasant becomes discontented, gradually *riotous*, and at length *desperate*, and the catastrophe generally concludes by the parishioners (*illegally*) cutting the proctor's ears off, and the proctor (*according to law*) hanging the parishioners.

The various modes of collecting tithes in Ireland (of which this is not the *worst*) are therefore a subject not unworthy the inquiry of the legislature, or unadapted to the duty of a Parliamentary Committee: and the Right Honourable Secretary must have more than *common* sagacity, if he can discover the *occult* disorders of a people without inquiring "what ails them," or find a mode of setting their *minds at ease* by rendering them *HOPELESS*.

N. B. If Mr. Dundas will inquire as to the following *parishes* and the following *persons*, he may obtain some information as to the above mode of collecting tithes in Ireland:—

The Rev. James Little, parish of Lackeen and Dromfecney,.....	County Mayo.
Patrick <i>Culkeen</i> ,.....	Ballina, ditto.
Hugh Higgins,.....	Lackeen and Killala, (the Dean's tithe) ditto.
George Sergeant,.....	Crosmolina, ditto.
George Smyth,.....	Kellyglass, Sligo.
Arthur Pue,	Easkey, ditto.
&c.	&c.

Tithes of a very *uncommon* description are also occasionally demanded in Ireland.—One

artful treaty, converts the purchased friend into the audacious enemy. But events have proved, that even our *subsidies* are *fatal*, and our boons destructive.

The King of Naples was subsidized by Great Britain and Ireland, until he lost his territories; the Prince of Portugal, until he emigrated from his country; the King of Prussia until his powers were annihilated; the Emperor of Russia, until he declared himself our *enemy*: the Emperor of Austria draws without ceremony, on the united treasury; and the King of Sweden received one hundred thousand pounds a month from England, until he abdicated his throne, and forfeited his liberty: and Spain is not only subsidized to any extent, but her peasantry are clothed by the contributions of *Ireland*, while the Irish peasant is ridiculed and laughed at for going *absolutely naked*.

Thus the debt of Ireland, by imperial wars and foreign subsidies,

species of tithing is peculiarly proper to be recorded:—The Reverend Lyster Battersby, protestant rector of Skreen (County Sligo), thought proper, without any lawful authority, to levy a sum of one shilling and eight pence each from the cottagers in his parish, under pretence of *TITHES*, which he denominated “*FAMILY MONEY*.”—This imposition was at length resisted by a peasant of the name of Gilgan:—however, two *magistrates* of that county, *Thomas Soden* and *William Griffith*, Esqrs. summoned Gilgan before them, and *Soden* absolutely granted a warrant to sell the peasant’s furniture (such as it might be) for *ONE SHILLING* and eight pence, *family money*, with *NINE SHILLINGS* and eleven pence halfpenny costs; and accordingly, an iron pot, in which this wretched peasant boiled his potatoes, was sold by public auction for 9s. 2d. and the Reverend Mr. Battersby *pocketed the purchase-money*.—But Mr. Barret, a humane attorney, having taken up the case, damages were recovered against the parson.—It is unfortunate, however, that this transaction never came either before the Bishop or the Chief Justice—and both the Clergyman and Magistrate remain *in statu quo*.

is becoming enormous, and her resources keeping no pace with her expenditure. The extensive commerce of England furnishes her with abundant wealth, while the inconsiderable trade of Ireland is inadequate to supply means even for her *own* expenses.

Thus Ireland advances not slowly towards her financial ruin: and the politics pursued at present by England give no reason to expect a sudden termination of the contest, which provokes these expenses. It will therefore be just, that the British nation should be informed, that the struggles which Ireland is now making in the common cause, are far beyond her present means; and that therefore, even for her own interest, every measure should be liberally adopted by Great Britain towards Ireland, which can increase the prosperity and the wealth, and consequently the *means* of the Irish people.

As to the arrangement of this work, one obvious eccentricity will be perceived; namely, the abruptness with which characters are introduced, before the persons become remarkable in any public transaction. This is a course, which certainly deviates from historic precedent, where the character generally follows the death and the actions of the party.

The author of this work has taken a different course; because he conceives, that, *after* the acts of a man's life have been fully divulged and commented on; after *all* his political measures have been *detailed*, and his capacity and the nature of his talents exemplified by the *facts* of his conduct, his character comes too late, and is in fact only an *index* to his actions, or a summary of what appeared palpable to every reader in the progress of the history. A *subsequent* character is only the critique and opinion of an author himself upon the qualities of mind, which appeared

to actuate a man's conduct, and which any reader may form as good a judgment upon from the perusal of the preceding incidents; the variety and circumstances of which mark and *distinguish* those qualities, that constitute character.

But when the delineation of character *precedes* the public acts of remarkable personages, it becomes more interesting as we advance through the transactions of the country from which they derived their celebrity, to deduce the *cause* of those events from the traits and intellectual qualities of it's most celebrated leaders.

With many of the public characters noticed in this Memoir, the author was personally intimate—his friendships or animosities were never founded on the feelings of a *partisan*, or the prejudices of *bigotry*.—Even towards the noble Lord, whose fatal grasp stopped the last breath of Irish independence, the author of this work never for a moment felt the most distant *personal* hostility—from him he never received an *individual* injury—his *public* conduct and his *public* character *alone* are subjects of reprobation.—The moment a minister accepts his office from the crown, that moment he becomes responsible to the people; to them he must account for the crimes of his administration; and to their opinions, perhaps to their *justice*, he must submit with resignation.

On the whole, this history will embrace a period full of the most *singular* events. Through it's details will be found an impoverished and subjugated people throwing off their chains by a *loyal* insurrection, arming for peace, and conquering without bloodshed—a more powerful nation acknowledging by it's *own* statutes it's *own* tyranny, and relinquishing without *force* a usurpation of centuries—the British minister restraining

the rights of the British *executive*, and the *Irish* people upholding the prerogative of the *English* monarchy—the toleration of *four* millions suspended to gratify the ascendancy of *one*—the Irish commons seduced to commit suicide upon their own delegation—the Irish nobility tamely abdicating the dignities of the peerage, and the honors of their ancestors—a rebellion *protracted*, to subdue an *independence*—and at length two nations consolidated into one, to render their national *distinctness* the more strikingly *remarkable*.

These are the outlines of this Memoir—the *details*, more especially of the *last* measure, unparalleled and alarming, must be important to the British nation, if it retain a spark of interest for its *own* security. No unfounded charges shall creep into this Memoir—the statements will be authenticated by documents, by records, and by confessions: and if the subjects of this history should touch the feelings, and excite an interest in the minds of the British people; if they should sympathize with the misfortune of their only sister, and learn from her fate the effects of corrupt authority, and the instability of human institutions; then will England perceive the errors of a contracted policy, and Ireland may expect more wise and liberal measures from the hand of an *enlightened* nation—then will the despotic rule of ministerial power yield to the demands of constitutional restriction—the crown and the country will experience the blessings of a more cordial *cooperation*, and mutual confidence and mutual benefits be the only subject of emulation between a *beloved* monarch and a *grateful* people

HISTORIC ANECDOTES, &c.

CHAP. I.

State of the Connexion between England and Ireland at early Periods—Misgovernment and Oppressions by England—Statistical Sketch of Ireland—It's miserable State in 1779—Constitution—Commerce—Catholics—American Revolt—Origin of the Irish Volunteers—Character of Lord Clare.

IT was not until an advanced stage of the American revolt had attracted the attention of enlightened Europe to the first principles of civil liberty, that Ireland began steadily to reflect on her own deprivations.—Commerce and constitution had been gradually withdrawn from her grasp, and the usurped supremacy* of the

* The claim of the British Parliament to bind Ireland by *British* statutes was at length most ably refuted by Mr. William Molyneux, representative for Dublin University, in his celebrated work published in 1698, entitled "*The Case of Ireland.*"

This work rendered the name of Mr. Molyneux illustrious:—however, by the English statute 6th Geo. I. this claim was declared to be *legal*, and in consequence was acted upon until the year 1782—when the British Parliament not only repealed that statute, but renounced the claim altogether, and admitted the *usurpation*.

British Parliament gave a death blow to the last descendant of Irish independence.

The apathy produced by habitual oppression had long benumbed the best energies of Ireland ;—her national spirit, depressed by the heavy hand of arbitrary restraint, almost forgot it's own existence ; and the proudest language of her constitution could only boast, that she was the annexed dependant of a greater and a freer country.

More than six centuries had passed away, since Ireland had first acknowledged a subordinate connexion with the English monarchy—her voluntary but partial submission to the sceptres of Henry and of Richard had been construed by their successors into the right of conquest—and the same spirit of turbulence and discord, which had generated the treachery and treasons of M'Morrough, was carefully cultivated by every English potentate, as the most effectual barrier against the struggles of a restless and semiconquered people—and Ireland, helpless and distracted, groaned for ages in obscurity under the accumulated pressure of internal strife and external tyranny.

The precise nature of the original submission of the Irish kings to the English monarchy remained in those dark ages doubtful and disregarded.—Tyrannic measures of arbitrary power on the one side, and turbulent resistance to oppressive authority on the other, were the necessary consequences of an undefined con-

nexion: even in more modern days, when the sword had ceased to be the arbiter of discussion, the constitutional basis of the federative compact remained still equivocal and undecided:—and while the Irish nation insisted upon the rights of a distinct crown, entailed upon the same dynasty, the English Ministers indefatigably laboured, to contract the connexion into the narrowest principles of colonial government.

But in whatever relative situation the two nations really stood, the same jealous and narrow principle might be perceived uniformly attending every measure enacted as to the Irish people.—If at any time a cheering ray of commercial advantage chanced for a moment to illuminate the dreary prospects of Ireland, the sordid spirit of monopoly instantly arose in England, and rendered every effort to promote a beneficial trade, or advance a rival manufacture, vain and abortive.

Commercial jealousy and arbitrary government united, therefore, to suppress every struggle of the Irish nation, and root up every seed of prosperity and civilisation.

Alarmed at the increasing population, the unsubdued spirit, and the inexhaustible resources of that strong and fertile island; a dread of her growing power excited a fallacious jealousy of her future importance. In her timidity or her avarice England lost sight of her truest interests, and of her nobler feelings; and kings, usurpers, and viceroys, as they respectively exercised the powers

of government, all acted towards Ireland upon the same blind and arbitrary principles, which they had imbibed from their education, or inherited from their predecessors.

This desperate policy, so repugnant to the attachment, and fatal to the repose of the two countries, excited the spirit of eternal warfare:—an enthusiastic love of national independence sharpened the sword, and the zealots of religious fanaticism threw away the scabbard—the septs fought against each other, the English against all—the population was thinned, but the survivors became inveterate; and though the wars and the massacres of Elizabeth and of Cromwell, by depopulating, appeared to have subjugated, the nation—the triumph was not glorious—and the conquest was not complete.

Direct persecution against principles only adds fuel to a conflagration—the persons of men may be coerced—but it is beyond the reach of human power to subdue the rooted, hereditary passions and prejudices of a persevering, ardent, and patriotic people:—such a nation may be gained over by address, or seduced by dissimulation, but can never be reclaimed by force, or overcome by persecution—yet from the very first intercourse between the two countries, that destructive system of force and of dissension, which so palpably led to the miseries of Ireland, had been sedulously cultivated, and unremittingly persevered in.

Thus grievously oppressed, and ruinously disunited, Ireland

struggled often, but she struggled in vain: the weight of her chains was too heavy for the feebleness of her constitution, and every effort to enlarge her liberty only gave a new pretext to the conqueror, to circumscribe it within a still narrower compass.

On the same false principle of government this oppressed nation was also systematically retained in a state of the utmost obscurity, and represented to the world as an insignificant and remote island, remarkable only for her turbulence and sterility: and so perfectly did this misrepresentation succeed, that while every republic and minor nation of Europe had become the theme of travellers and the subject of historians, Ireland was visited only to be despised, and spoken of only to be calumniated.—In truth, she is as yet but little known by the rest of Europe, and but partially even to the people of England. But when the extraordinary capabilities, the resources, and the powers of Ireland are fully known, an interest must arise in every breast, which reflects on her misfortunes—it is time that the curtain which has been so long interposed between Ireland and the rest of Europe, should be drawn aside—and that a just judgment may be formed of the policy or impolicy of measures, which have been adopted nominally to govern, but substantially to suppress her power and prosperity.

The position of Ireland upon the face of the globe peculiarly formed her for universal intercourse, and adapted her in every

respect for legislative independence. Separated by a great sea from England,—the Irish people, dissimilar in customs, at least equal in talent, and vastly superior in energy, possess an island near 900 miles in circumference; with a climate, for the uniform mildness of temperature and moderation of seasons, unequalled in the universe—the parching heats, or piercing colds, the deep snows, the torrent, and the hurricane, which other countries so fatally experience, are here unknown.—Though her great exposure to the spray of the Atlantic increases the humidity of the atmosphere, it only adds to the fecundity of the soil, and distinguishes her fertile fields by the productions of an almost perpetual vegetation.

The geographical situation of Ireland is not less favourable to commerce, than her climate is to agriculture—her position on the western extremity of Europe would enable her to intercept the trade of the new world from all other nations—the merchandise of London, of Bristol, and of Liverpool, must skirt her shores, before it arrives at its own destination; and some of the finest harbours in the world invite the inhabitants of this gifted island to accept the trade of India, and form the emporium of Europe.

The internal and natural advantages of Ireland are great and inexhaustible—rich mines are found in almost every quarter of the island; gold is discovered in the beds of streams, and washed from the sands of rivulets—the mountains are generally arable to their summits—the vallies exceed in fertility the most prolific soils of

England—the rivulets, which flow along the declivities, adapt the country most peculiarly to the improvement of irrigation; and the bogs and mosses of Ireland, utterly unlike the fens and marshes of England, emit no damp or noxious exhalations; and give a plentiful and cheering fuel to the surrounding peasantry; or, when reclaimed, become the most luxuriant pastures.

The population of Ireland is great and progressive.—About five millions of a brave and hardy race of men are seen scattered through the fields, or swarming in the villages—a vast redundancy of grain, and innumerable flocks and herds, should furnish to them not only the source of trade, but every means of comfort.

Dublin, the second city in the British Empire, though it yields in extent, yields not in architectural beauty to the metropolis of England.—For some years previous to the Union, its progress was excessive—the locality of the parliament—the residence of the nobility and commons—the magnificence of the viceregal court—the active hospitality of the people—and the increasing commerce of the port, all together gave a brilliant prosperity to that splendid and luxurious capital.

Ireland* thus possessing the strongest features of a powerful

* The relative size of Ireland, compared to England and Wales, is about 18 to 30—it contains about eighteen millions of acres—is about 285 miles long, and above 160

state, though labouring under every disadvantage, which a restricted commerce and a jealous ally could inflict upon her prosperity, might still have regarded with contempt the comparatively unequal resources and inferior powers of half the monarchies of Europe :—her insular situation—her great fertility—the character of her people—the amount of her revenues—and the extent of her population, gave her a decided superiority over other nations, and rendered her crown, if accompanied by her affections, not only a brilliant but a most substantial ornament to the British empire.

However, though thus gifted, and thus enriched by the hand of Nature, the fomented dissensions of her own natives had wedded Ireland to poverty, and prepared her for subjugation,—her innate capacities lay dormant and inactive—her dearest interests were

broad—has 4 provinces—32 counties—260 baronies—2293 parishes—3520 annual fairs—upwards of five millions of inhabitants—about four millions of whom are Roman Catholics.—Ireland furnishes more than one hundred thousand soldiers and sailors to the English fleet and army—and retains at home above one million of hardy men from 17 to 47 years of age, fit to bear arms.—It's annual *ordinary* revenue is upwards of five millions and a half sterling, being above 130 millions of French livres—and much more than the *ordinary* revenue of most nations in Europe.—It pays four millions and a half sterling, annually, towards the army of the empire, being 108 millions of French livres, and transmits annually four millions sterling to England, to pay the interest of her debt, and the rents and pensions of absentees and emigrants.

forgotten by herself, or resisted by her ally; and the gifts and bounties of a favouring Providence, though lavished, were lost on a divided people.

By the paralyzing system thus adopted towards Ireland, she was at length reduced to the lowest ebb—her poverty and distresses, almost at their extent, were advancing fast to their final consummation,—her commerce had almost ceased—her manufactures extinguished—her constitution withdrawn—the people absolutely desponding,—while public and individual bankruptcy finished a picture of the deepest misery, and the year 1779 found Ireland almost every thing, but what such a country and such a people ought to have been.

This wretched period cannot be better described, than by a most able and just exponent of Irish grievances, published in the year 1779, by Mr. Hely Hutchinson, (son of the present Lord Donoughmore and Hutchinson,) then Provost of the Dublin University, an eloquent and very distinguished member of the Irish Parliament.—In his book entitled *Commercial Restraints*—Mr. Hutchinson gives a pathetic description of the state to which Ireland was reduced by the jealous and narrow policy of England.

“The present state of Ireland (writes Mr. Hutchinson) teems with every circumstance of national poverty,—whatever the land produces is greatly reduced in its value; the merchant justly complains, that all his business is at a stand, that he cannot discount his bills, and neither money nor paper circulates.—In this and the last year, about twenty thousand manufacturers in this metropolis have

This lamentable state of the Irish nation was not the result of any one distinct cause : a combination of depressing circumstances united to bear down every progressive effort of that injured people. Immured in a labyrinth of difficulties and embarrassments, no clew was found to lead them through the mazes of their prison ; and, helpless and desponding, they sunk into a doze of torpid inactivity, while their humiliated and inefficient parliaments, restrained by foreign and arbitrary laws, subjected to the dictation of the British

“ been reduced to beggary for want of employment— they were for a considerable
 “ length of time supported by alms. Almost every branch of the revenue has
 “ fallen—a militia law, passed in the last session, could not be carried into execu-
 “ tion for want of money.

“ Our distress and poverty are of the utmost notoriety, the proof does not solely
 “ depend upon calculation, or estimate—it is palpable in every public and private
 “ transaction, and deeply felt among all orders of our people.

“ An embargo on our provision (continued for three years), highly injurious to
 “ our victualling trade, the increasing drain of remittances to England, for rents,
 “ salaries, profits of offices, pensions and interest, and for the payment of forces
 “ abroad, have made the decline more rapid,” &c.

This book acquired so much character, and spoke so many plain truths, that for many years it was quoted as an authority in the Irish Parliament.—Mr. Flood often declared, that, if there were but two copies of it in print, he would give a thousand pounds for one of them.—It will be interesting to compare the state of Ireland in 1779 with that in 1794, when she had enjoyed only twelve years of constitutional independence and unrestricted commerce.

Council, and obstructed in the performance of its conditional functions, retained scarcely the shadow of an independent legislature.

A statute of Henry the Seventh of England, framed by his Attorney General, Sir Edward Poyning, restrained the Irish Parliament from originating any law whatever either in the Lords or Commons. Before any statute could be finally discussed, it was previously to be submitted to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and his Privy Council, for their consideration, who might at their pleasure reject it, or transmit it to England.—If transmitted to England, the British Attorney General and Privy Council were invested with a power either to suppress it altogether, or model it at their own will, and then return it to Ireland, with permission to the Irish Parliament to pass it into a law, but without any alteration, though it frequently returned from England so changed, as to retain hardly a trace of its original features, or a point of its original object.

This statute which at the early period when it was enacted might have been useful to check the independent or factious disposition of the English settlers, who had imbibed Irish habits and prepossessions, though by the change of times and progress of civilization, it became unnecessary for this purpose, remained a most tyrannical instrument in the hands of a rival nation—consequently its injurious effects were discernible whenever the Irish Parliament asserted the rights or interests of its own country—and every statute, which had the most remote tendency to interfere with that

monopoly of trade or superiority of manufacture, to which England assumed an exclusive right, was sure to be smothered in it's birth by the British Council, or rendered nugatory by their interpolation.

Yet, as if this arbitrary law were insufficient to secure Great Britain from the effects of those rival advantages, which Ireland might in process of time eventually acquire; and as if that counteracting power, with which England had invested herself by the law of Poyning, were unequal to the task of effectually suppressing all rivalry of the Irish people, and independence of the Irish Parliament, it was thought advisable, by Great Britain, to usurp a positive right to legislate for Ireland, without her own consent or the interference of her Parliament: and a law was accordingly enacted at Westminster in the sixth year of the reign of George the First, by one sweeping clause of which England assumed a despotic power, and declared her inherent right to bind Ireland by every British statute, in which she should be expressly designated: and thus, by the authority of the British Council on the one hand, and the positive right assumed by the British Parliament upon the other, Ireland retained no more the attributes of an independent nation, than a monarch, attended in a dungeon with all the state and trappings of royalty, and bound hand and foot in golden shackles, could be justly styled an independent potentate.

The effect of this tyrannical and ruinous system fell most heavily on the trade of Ireland.—It's influence was experienced not

merely by any particular branch of commerce, but in every stage of manufacture, of arts, of trade, and of agriculture. In every struggle of the Irish Parliament to promote the commerce or the manufactures of their country, the British monopolizers were perpetually victorious; and even the speculative jealousy of a manufacturing village of Great Britain was of sufficient weight to negative any measure, however beneficial to the general prosperity of the sister country.

The same jealousy and the same system, which operated so fatally against the advancement of her commerce, operated as strongly against the improvement of her constitution. England was well aware, that the acquirement of an independent Parliament would be the sure forerunner of commercial liberty; and, possessed of the means to counteract these objects, she seemed determined never to relax the strength of that power, by the despotic exercise of which Ireland had been so long continued in a state of thralldom.

Thus Ireland had sunk into a state of lethargic vassalage, and was governed, if not under the title, certainly in the true spirit of "the rights of conquest."

But, exclusive of these slavish restraints (the necessary consequence of a dependent legislature), another system, not less adverse to the general prosperity of the whole island, than repugnant to the principles of natural justice and of sound policy, had

been long acted upon with every severity, that bigotry could suggest, or intolerance could dictate.

The penal statutes, under the tyrannical pressure of which the Catholics had so long and so grievously laboured, though in some instances softened down, still bore heavily upon four fifths of the Irish population—a code, which would have dishonored even the sanguinary pen of Draco, had inflicted every pain and penalty, every restriction and oppression, under which a people could linger out a miserable existence.—By these statutes the exercise of religion had been held a crime, the education of children a misdemeanour—the son was encouraged to betray his father—the child rewarded for the ruin of his parent—the house of God declared a public nuisance—the officiating pastor proclaimed an outlaw—the acquirement of property absolutely prohibited—the exercise of trades restrained—plunder legalized in courts of law, and breach of trust rewarded in courts of equity—the Irish Catholic excluded from the possession of any office or occupation in the state, the law, the army, the navy, the municipal bodies, and the chartered corporations—and the mild doctrines of the christian faith perverted, even in the pulpit, to the worst purposes of religious persecution.*

Yet under this galling yoke the Irish for near eighty years remained tranquil and submissive:—the ignorance, into which

* The statutes, which formed this code, will be severally pointed out in the progress of this Memoir.

poverty and wretchedness had plunged that people, prevented them from perceiving the whole extent of the oppression; and these penal laws, while they operated as an insuperable bar to the advancement of the Catholic, deeply affected the general interest of the Protestant—the impoverished tenant—the needy landlord—the unenterprising merchant—the idle artisan, could all trace the origin of their wants to the enactment of these statutes. —Profession was not permitted to engage the mind of youth, or education to cultivate his understanding—dissolute habits, the certain result of idleness and illiterateness, were consequently making a rapid progress in almost every class of society. —The gentry were not exempt from the habits of the peasant; the spirit of industry took her flight altogether from the island; and, as the loss of commerce and constitution had no counteracting advantages, every thing combined to reduce Ireland in 1778 to a state of the most general and unqualified depression.

It was about this period, when the short-sighted policy of the British Government had by it's own arbitrary proceedings planted the seeds of that political philosophy, afterwards so fatal to the most powerful monarchies of Europe, that Ireland began to feel herself affected by the struggles of America:—the spirit of independence had crossed the Atlantic, and the Irish people,

awakened from a trance, beheld with anxiety the contest, in which they now began to feel an interest.—They regarded with admiration the exertions of a colony combating for the first principles of civil liberty, and giving to the world an instructive lesson of fortitude and perseverance.

Spread over a vast expanse of region, America, without wealth—without resources—without population—without fortresses—without allies—had every thing to contend with, and every thing to conquer:—yet, as if she had been designated by Providence for an example to the universe of what even powerless states can achieve by enthusiasm and unanimity, her strength increased with her deprivations, and the firmness of one great and good man converted the feebleness of a colony into the power of an empire.—The defeats of Washington augmented his armies—his wants and necessities called forth his intellect—while his wisdom, firmness, and moderation, procured him powerful allies, and secured him ultimate victory.—The strength of Great Britain at length yielded to the vigor of his mind, and the fortitude of his people; and Lord Cornwallis, (the chosen instrument for oppressing nations,) by his defeat, and his captivity, established the independence of America, and led back the relics of his conquered army, to commemorate in the mother country the impotence of her power, and emancipation of her colonies.

While these great events were gradually proceeding towards their final completion, Ireland became every day a more anxious spectator of the arduous conflict—every incident in America began to communicate a sympathetic impulse to the Irish people :—the moment was critical :—the nation became enlightened—a patriotic ardor took possession of her whole frame, and before she had well considered the object of her solicitude, the spark of constitutional liberty had found it's way into her bosom.

The disposition of Ireland to avail herself of the circumstances of those times, so favourable to the attainment of her rights, without departing from the principles of her loyalty, now openly avowed itself.—Her determination to reclaim her constitution from the British Government became unequivocal, and she began to assume the attitude and language of a nation “entitled to independence.”—The sound of arms and the voice of freedom echoed from every quarter of the island—distinctions were forgotten, or disregarded—every rank, every religion, alike caught the general feeling,—but firmness and discretion characterised her proceedings :—she gradually arose from torpor and obscurity—her native spirit drew aside the curtain, that had so long concealed her from the world ; and exhibited an armed and animated people, claiming their natural rights, and demanding their constitutional liberty.

When the dawn of political liberty begins to diffuse itself over a nation, great and gifted characters suddenly spring up from among the people—animated by new subjects, their various talents and principles become developed—they interweave themselves with the events of their country, become inseparable from it's misfortunes, or identified with it's prosperity.

Ireland, at this era, possessed many men of superior capacities—some distinguished by their pure attachment to constitutional liberty—others by their slavish deference to ruling powers and patronizing authorities.—Among those whom the spirit of these times called forth to public notice was seen one of the most bold and energetic leaders of modern days, an intimate knowledge of whose marked and restless character is a necessary preface and preliminary to a recital of Irish occurrences, in which the effects of his passions will be every where traced, and the mischievous errors of his judgment be perceived and lamented.

This person was John Fitzgibbon, afterwards Earl of Clare—Attorney General, and Lord High Chancellor of Ireland.—His ascertained pedigree was short, though his family name bespoke an early respectability. His grandfather was obscure—his father, intended for the profession of a popish priest, but possessing a mind superior to the habits of monkish seclusion, procured him-

self to be called to the Irish bar, where his talents raised him to the highest estimation, and finally established him in fame and fortune.

John Fitzgibbon, the second son of this man, was called to the bar in 1772.—Naturally dissipated, he for some time attended but little to the duties of his profession ; but, on the death of his elder brother, and his father, he found himself in possession of all those advantages, which led him rapidly forward to the extremity of his objects.—Considerable fortune—professional talents—extensive connexions—and undismayed confidence, elevated him to those stations, on which he afterwards appeared so conspicuously seated ; while the historic eye, as it follows his career, perceives him lightly bounding over every obstacle, which checked his course, to that goal where all the trophies and thorns of power were collected for his reception.

From his advancement, Ireland computed a new epocha—the period of his life comprised a series of transactions, in the importance of which the recollection of former events was merged and extinguished :—to the character of Lord Clare may be traced the occult source of heretofore inexplicable measures—in his influence will be found the secret spring, which so often rendered the machine of Irish Government rapid and irregular ; and as we pass along through those interesting scenes, which distinguished

Ireland for twenty years, we often anticipate his councils, and as often mourn the result of our anticipation.

In the Earl of Clare we find a man eminently gifted with talents adapted either for a blessing or a curse to the nation he inhabited ; but early enveloped in high and dazzling authority, he lost his way ; and considering his power as a victory, he ruled his country as a conquest :—warm, but indiscriminate in his friendships—equally indiscriminate and implacable in his animosities—he carried to the grave the passions of his childhood, and has bequeathed to the public a record,* which determines that trait of his varied character beyond the power of refutation.

He hated powerful talents, because he feared them ; and trampled on modest merit, because it was incapable of resistance. Authoritative and peremptory in his address ; commanding, able, and arrogant, in his language ; a daring contempt for public opinion seemed to be the fatal principle which misguided his conduct ; and Ireland became divided between the friends of his patronage—the slaves of his power—and the enemies to his tyranny.

* His Lordship's last will, now a record in the prerogative office of Dublin, a most extraordinary composition of hatred and affection, piety and malice, &c.

His character had no medium, his manners no mediocrity—the example of his extremes was adopted by his intimates, and excited in those who knew him feelings either of warm attachment, or of rivetted aversion.

While he held the seals in Ireland, he united a vigorous capacity with the most striking errors:—as a judge, he collected facts with a rapid precision, and decided on them with a prompt asperity:—depending too much on the strength of his own judgment, and the acuteness of his own intellect;—he hated precedent, and despised the highest judicial authorities, because they were not his own.

Professing great control over others, he assumed but little over himself: he gave too loose a rein to his impressions, consequently the neutrality of the judge occasionally yielded to the irritation of the moment; and equity at times became the victim of despatch, or a sacrifice to pertinacity.

The calm dignity of a high and elevated mind, deriving weight from its own purity, and consequence from its own example, did not seem the characteristic of the tribunal where he presided; and decorum was preserved, less by a respect for his person, than a dread of his observation; for he disliked presumption in every person but himself, and discountenanced it in every body, but those whom he patronized.

He investigated fraud with assiduity, and punished it with rigor;—yet it was obvious, that in doing so he enjoyed the double satisfaction of detecting delinquency, and of gratifying the misanthropy of an habitual invective—for never did he poise the scale, without also exercising the sword of justice.

Yet in many instances he was an able, and in many a most useful judge—and though his talents were generally overrated, and many of his decisions condemned—it may be truly said, that, with all his failings, if he had not been a vitious statesman, he might have been a virtuous chancellor.

Though his conversation was sometimes licentious and immoral, and always devoid of refined wit, and of genuine humour—yet in domestic life he had many meritorious, and some amiable qualities—an indefatigable and active friend, a kind and affectionate master; an indulgent landlord—liberal, hospitable, and munificent, he possessed the seed of qualities very superior to those which he cultivated, and in some instances evinced himself susceptible of those finer sensations, which, if their growth had been permitted in his vigorous and fertile mind, might have placed him on the very summit of private character: but, unfortunately, his temper, his ambition, and his power, seemed to unite in one common cause, to impede and stunt the growth of almost every principle, which would have become a virtue.

As a politician and a statesman, the character of Lord Clare is too well known, and it's effects are too generally experienced, to be mistaken or misrepresented—the era of his reign was the downfall of his country—his councils accelerated what his policy might have suppressed, and have marked the annals of Ireland with stains and miseries, unequalled and indelible.

In council, Lord Clare—rapid, peremptory, and overbearing—regarded promptness of execution, rather than discretion of arrangement, and piqued himself more on expertness of thought than sobriety of judgment. Through all the calamities of Ireland, the mild voice of conciliation never escaped his lips; and when the torrent of civil war had subsided in his country, he held out no olive, to show that the deluge had receded.

Acting upon a conviction, that his power was but coexistent with the order of public establishments, and the tenure of his office limited to the continuance of administration, he supported both with less prudence, and more desperation, than sound policy or an enlightened mind should permit or dictate; his extravagant doctrines of religious intolerance created the most mischievous pretexts for his intemperance in upholding them; and, under colour of defending the principles of one revolution, he had nearly plunged the nation into all the miseries of another.

His political conduct has been accounted uniform,—but in detail it will be found to have been miserably inconsistent :—In 1781, he took up arms to obtain a declaration of Irish independence,—in 1800, he recommended the introduction of a military force, to assist in it's extinguishment ;—he proclaimed Ireland a free nation in 1783,—and argued that it should be a province in 1799 ;—in 1782 he called the acts of the British Legislature towards Ireland “ *a daring usurpation on the rights of a free people,** ”—and in 1800 he transferred Ireland to the usurper. On all occasions his ambition as despotically governed his politics, as his reason invariably sunk before his prejudice.

Though he intrinsically hated a Legislative Union, his lust for power induced him to support it ; the preservation of office overcame the impulse of conviction, and he strenuously supported that measure, after having openly avowed himself it's enemy : it's completion, however, blasted his hopes, and hastened his dissolution. The restlessness of his habit, and the obtrusiveness of his disposition, became insupportably embarrassing to the British cabinet—the danger of his talents as a minister, and the inade-

* In his Lordship's answer to the address of Dublin University, on the 14th of April, 1782, upon the declaration of rights, he used these words ; and added, that “ he had uniformly expressed that opinion, both in public and in private.”

quacy of his judgment as a statesman, had been proved in Ireland ; —he had been a useful instrument in that country—but the same line of services, which he performed in Ireland, would have been ruinous to Great Britain, and Lord Clare was no longer consulted.

Thus the Union effected, through his friends, what Ireland could never accomplish through his enemies—his total overthrow. Unaccustomed to control, and unable to submit, he returned to his country—weary—drooping—and disappointed ; regretting what he had done—yet miserable that he could do no more :—his importance had expired with the Irish Parliament—his patronage ceased to supply food for his ambition—the mind and the body became too sympathetic for existence, and he sunk into the grave—a conspicuous example of human talent and human frailty.

Thus fell one of the most distinguished personages of the British Empire.—In his person he was about the middle size—slight, and not graceful—his eyes, large, dark, and penetrating, betrayed some of the boldest traits of his uncommon character—his countenance, though expressive and manly, yet discovered nothing, which could deceive the physiognomist into an opinion of his magnanimity, or call forth an eulogium on his virtues.

During twenty momentous and eventful years, the life of Lord Clare is in fact the history of Ireland—as in romance some puissant and doughty chieftain appears prominent in every feat of

chivalry—the champion in every strife—the hero of every encounter—and, after a life of toil and of battle, falls surrounded by a host of foes—a victim to his own ambition and temerity.

Thus Earl Clare, throughout those eventful periods, will be seen bold, active, and desperate—engaging fiercely in every important conflict of the Irish nation—and at length, after having sacrificed his country to his passions and his ambition, endeavouring to atone for his errors, by sacrificing himself.

CHAP. II.

State of the Irish Parliament previous to 1779. — Frequent Subjects of Controversy with the British Government. — The Aristocracy of Ireland. — The Country Gentlemen. — The Absentees. — The Irish Bar. — Character of the Prime Sergeant, Mr. Burgh — contrasted with that of the Attorney General, Mr. Scott. — Further Observations on the State of the Parliament. — Origin of the Irish Volunteers. — War between England and France. — Conduct of the Irish Nation during the Contest. — Unprotected State of Ireland. — Armed Associations. — The Catholics. — The Protestants divided in Opinion respecting religious Toleration. — Moderation and Patriotism of the Catholics.

THE habits of commerce and the pursuits of avarice had not, at this period, absorbed the spirit or contracted the intellect of the Irish people. — That vigorous, comprehensive, and pathetic eloquence, so peculiar to Ireland, which grasped at once the reason and the passions, still retained it's ascendancy at the bar, and it's pre-eminence in the Senate: and the Commons' House of Parliament, about the period of Lord Clare's first introduction into public notice, contained as much character, as much elo-

quence, and as much sincerity, as any popular assembly since the most brilliant æra of the Roman republic.

Splendid and superior talent, whether possessed by a friend or by an enemy — whether prostituted to the purposes of a vicious government, or embellishing the exertions of a patriotic virtue — will still be respected: the world will ever admire the extraordinary gifts of nature, though at the same time it may lament and deprecate the misapplication of those endowments. But it is equally observable, that patriotism and disappointment, pique and public spirit, often assume the same aspect, and use the same language; and that men not unfrequently acquire high reputation for their conduct, who, in justice, deserve strong reprobation for their motives.

It is impossible to scrutinise with too keen and penetrating an eye the lines and features of historic character, of which the clear and accurate discrimination is so essentially necessary to found the basis of knowledge, and establish the maxims of experience. Consistently, therefore, with these common axioms of human nature, it could not have been expected that characters so varied, and principles so heterogeneous, as those which composed the Irish Senate in 1779, should at once collect their views into the same focus: — interesting, urgent, and extraordinary inducements are necessary to unite the members of any popular assembly on one object; and, even when united, a persevering zeal and

animated exertion can alone cement and perpetuate the union.— Ambition and interest have their slaves and their proselytes in every public body; and deeply impressed must be that sense of patriotic duty which can obstinately resist those powerful instruments of seduction.

It might be reasonable to infer that a nation, so long retained in the trammels of dependence—so habituated, through successive generations, to control and to subjection—would have lost much of its natural energy, and more of its national feeling. But, though the Irish Parliament, previous to 1779, in general manifested strong indications of a declining and a subservient body—yet, even after centuries of depression, when roused by the sting of accumulating usurpation, its latent spirit occasionally burst forth, and should have convinced the British Government, that, although the flame may be smothered, the spark is un-extinguishable and eternal.

These contests in the Irish Legislature had become more warm and more frequent: and, although, by the operation of Poyning's law, the parliamentary discussions were generally restricted to local subjects and domestic arrangements—yet constitutional questions of a vital tendency incidentally occurred; and the insidious exercise of controlling powers, assumed by the British Cabinet over the concerns of Ireland, often afforded matter of serious controversy between the viceroy and the nation, and had, in

some instances, been resisted by the Parliament with a warmth and a pertinacity which foretold a certainty of more obstinate contests*.

* On many occasions previous to 1779, the Irish Commons asserted their independent rights and privileges with great warmth, though sometimes without success. In 1749, a redundancy of £53,000 remaining in the Irish treasury — an unappropriated balance in favor of the nation, after paying all the establishments — the King sent over his letter, to draw that sum to England, as a part of his hereditary revenue. But the Irish Parliament resisted the authority of his Majesty's letter, as an encroachment on the distinctness and independence of Ireland; a part of that sum having arisen from additional duties imposed by her Parliament. The King consulted the English judges, who were of opinion that the King's *previous consent* was necessary to its appropriation: but the Irish Commons insisted on their right of appropriation, and asserted that his Majesty's *subsequent assent* only was necessary. — This contest was warmly maintained until the year 1753, when the Irish Commons succeeded in establishing their principle: but the King had in the mean time drawn the money into his power; and thus ended the argument. — This transaction excited great heat and animosity in Ireland.

Another cause of incessant discontent between the two Legislatures was the right of appeal, assumed by the British Lords, with respect to suits decided by the courts in Ireland. The substantial reason of this assumption, however artfully palliated, really was, that so many forfeited Irish estates had been purchased by Englishmen, that they were afraid to trust the determination of titles exclusively to Ireland.

However, the Irish judges, who were in general Englishmen, and held their offices during pleasure only, endeavoured to enforce in Ireland the decrees of the British House of Lords, by attaching the sheriff of Kildare, who had refused to

These struggles, however, although frequent, were fruitless. The country was not yet ripe for independence :—constitutional freedom had been so long obsolete, that even it's first principles were execute their order : but the Irish Parliament committed the chief baron and judges of the Exchequer, for their contempt in so doing. This gave rise to the celebrated statute of the 6th of Geo. I. in England, declaring the total legislative and juridical dependence of Ireland upon Great Britain ; to which statute, as the Irish were not then in a condition to resist, they reluctantly submitted, till it was repealed in 1782.

The principles of Mr. Molyneux's "*Case of Ireland*," published in 1698, had never ceased to make a strong impression on the minds of the Irish people. The British Parliament ordered it to be burned by the hands of the common executioner : but that measure defeated it's own object, by greatly increasing the celebrity and circulation of the obnoxious volume.—In 1753, the same principles were strongly inculcated, in several publications, by a very able writer, Doctor Charles Lucas, member for Dublin. For those writings, he was expelled from the house : but he afterward resumed his seat with increased character and influence ; and, to this day, his statue, in white marble, stands eminently conspicuous in the Royal Exchange at Dublin, as a monument of his steady patriotism.—Before him, Dean Swift, whose name is still adored by the Irish, had employed his masterly pen with powerful effect in fostering the spirit of independence : and, at a subsequent period, during Lord Townsend's administration, the contests grew warmer, and acquired a greater appearance of consistency. In short, all these circumstances together contributed to keep the subject alive from time to time, until at length the Legislatures of both kingdoms virtually declared by statute that the Irish people had been right, and the British Legislature and Council wrong, throughout every part of these constitutional contests.

nearly forgotten ; and the people were again to learn the rudiments, before they could speak the language, of liberty. But the fortitude, the wisdom, and the perseverance of the Anglo-American colonies — the feebleness, the impolicy, and the divisions of Great Britain — soon taught Ireland the importance of the crisis ; and, by a firmness, a moderation, and a unanimity, unparalleled in the annals of revolution, the Irish Volunteers acquired for their country a civic crown, which nothing but the insanity of rebellion, and the artifices and frauds of Union, could ever have torn from the brow of the Irish people.

The men, who, at this period, occupied the Irish Senate, were not altogether such as would be the most ready to enter suddenly into popular views, or to receive popular impressions. The aristocratic principle had long possessed a decisive preponderance in the Legislature ; and, as the leaders of parties in the British Parliament, so those in the Irish, generally contended rather for individual power than for national advancement. Hence the aristocracy and the nobles crowded round the Government, as the emporium of their profits and their honors : the borough-interest gave them influence in the Commons : their rank gave them a connexion with the State ; and both united in gaining them an authority over the people.

It was conceived that all these advantages might be endangered, or perhaps utterly lost, even by a single step in the

career of revolution : and it is therefore not surprising, that the aristocracy of Ireland, swayed as they were by their pride and their jealousies, showed themselves slow and reluctant to admit or act upon the political distinction between revolution for and revolution against a constitution.

The resident country gentlemen, less connected with the Government, and consequently more national in their principles, had yet many difficulties to encounter, and, without able and extensive aid, would have been altogether incompetent even to attempt the task of constitutional regeneration. Their habits were in general un-adapted to public business ; and many of them, though possessed of extensive demesnes, had inadequate fortunes. The hospitable disposition and convivial habits of the Irish gentry of that day, by creating an expenditure far beyond the limits of their income, had a sensible effect on the independence of their situations ; and their intimacy was therefore assiduously cultivated by the viceroy, whose diplomatic vigilance was ever on the watch, to take advantage of their frailties.

The progress of this system was sometimes discernible by it's disgraceful consequences :—the old Irish gentleman of that day was hospitable, and became poor : the new Irish upstart was narrow, and grew rich. The prodigality of the one, and the avarice of the other, not unfrequently met at the same door : the minister was the host ; and the guests became corrupted. The

intrinsic honesty, however, and the native independence of the country gentlemen in the aggregate, soon became conspicuous: and the patriotic enthusiasm, which in 1780 universally diffused itself over the nation, quickly banished every sordid principle from the Irish Senate, and brought to life talents and abilities, which in common times would have ever remained entombed and lost in diffidence and obscurity.

A third body of men, which has ever been and ever will remain an obstacle in every point of view to the substantial prosperity of Ireland, exerted themselves more particularly at this period, in giving a strenuous and weighty opposition to every measure of innovation:—the absentees*, who resided at the British court, and knew their Irish demesnes only by name and by income—who felt no interest but for their rents, and no patriotism but for the territory—were ever alive to, and alarmed at, any legislative measure originating in Ireland. Equally ignorant and regardless of her constitutional rights, they ever showed themselves the steady adherents of the Minister for the time being: their proxies in the Lords, and their influence in the Commons, were transferred to him on a card or in a letter, and, on every division in both

* The absentees of the present day annually draw from Ireland between two and three millions sterling, to be expended in Great Britain. Some of the law-offices of the greatest emolument, connected with the Irish courts of justice, are now held by constant absentees.

houses, almost invariably formed a phalanx against the true and genuine interests of the country.

Thus, however zealous and determined the incipient exertions of the Irish nation might have been, they would probably have been crushed and extinguished, had not a class of men, possessing the first talents in the senate and the highest confidence of the country, stepped boldly forward to support the people. In those days, the Irish bar—a body equally formidable to the Government by their character and their capacity—too independent to be restrained, and too proud to be corrupted—comprised many sons of the resident noblemen and commoners of Ireland. The legal science was at that time considered as almost an indispensable part of an Irish gentleman's education: the practice was then not a trade, but a profession. Eloquence was cultivated by it's votaries, as a preparation for the higher duties of the senate: and, as almost every peer and every commoner had a relative enrolled among their number, so they had an interest in the conduct and the honor of that class of society. The influence therefore of the bar, as a body—increased by the general respect for the connexions and cultivated talents of it's members—gave them an ascendancy both in and out of Parliament, which could scarcely be counteracted: and, on certain trying occasions, the conduct of some of the law-officers afforded experimental proof, that even they considered their offices as no longer tenable with advantage to the

King, if the Minister should attempt to use them as instruments against the people.

The rank and station of the law-officers of Ireland in those days were peculiarly dignified, and conveyed an impression of wise and sedate importance, which the modern relaxation of forms and of distinctions has injudiciously diminished.—The office of Prime Sergeant, then the first law-officer of Ireland, was filled at this period by one of the most amiable and eloquent men that ever appeared on the stage of politics — by Walter Hussy Burgh, whose conduct in a subsequent transaction rendered him justly celebrated and illustrious. This gentleman was then representative for Dublin University ; in which office, he and Mr. Fitzgibbon were colleagues — men, in whose public characters scarcely a trait of similarity can be discovered. Mild, moderate, and patriotic, Mr. Burgh was proud without arrogance, and dignified without effort : equally attentive to public concerns and careless of his own, he had neither avarice to acquire wealth, nor parsimony to retain it : — liberal, even to profusion — friendly, to a fault — and disinterested, to a weakness — he was honest without affluence, and ambitious without corruption : — his eloquence was of the highest order — figurative, splendid, and convincing : — the errors of his conduct were lost in the brightness of his virtues : — at the bar, in the Parliament, and among the people, he was equally admired, and universally respected.

But, when we compare Mr. Burgh with the then Attorney General of Ireland, who had been selected by Lord Townsend to bear down, if possible, the spirit of the country*, the contrast may give a strong view of that policy, which falling ministers frequently and perhaps judiciously adopt, of endeavouring, if practicable, to enlist and seat upon their benches some popular and elevated personage of opposition, who, by his character, may give strength to the party which surrounds him, or at least may for ever prostrate his own reputation by the unpopularity of the connexion.

Mr. John Scott — then Attorney General, and afterwards created Earl of Clonmell, and Chief Justice of Ireland — exhibited the most striking contrast to the character of the Prime Sergeant. Sprung from the humbler order of society, he adventured upon

* Mr. Scott had become distinguished at the bar for a bold and undaunted address, when Lord Townsend, being hard pressed by the opposition, desired the present Sir John Lees to look out for some hard-bitted stout barrister, who would not give or take quarter with the patriots. Sir John heard of Mr. Scott; and, after a consultation with Lord Lifford (then Chancellor), Mr. Scott was brought into Parliament, and, from that moment till the day of his death, never omitted one favorable opportunity of serving himself. His skill was unrivalled, and his success proverbial. — He was full of anecdotes, though not the most refined: those in private society he not only told, but acted; and, when he perceived that he had made a very good exhibition, he immediately withdrew, that he might leave the most lively impression of his pleasantry behind him.

the world without any advantage, save the strength of his intellect and the versatility of his talents. His boldness was his first introduction—his policy, his ultimate preferment.—Courageous*, vulgar, humorous, artificial, he knew the world well, and he profited by that knowledge:—he cultivated the powerful; he bullied the timid; he fought the brave; he flattered the vain; he duped the credulous; and he amused the convivial. Half liked, half reprobated, he was too high to be despised, and too low to be respected. His language was coarse, and his principles arbitrary†:

* His Lordship fought several duels before he was Chief Justice of the King's Bench.—The late Earl of Landaff, and the present Lord Tyrawly, were two of his antagonists.

† The principle which Mr. Scott avowed in Parliament, and acted upon as Attorney General, was, that "*might constituted right*:" and he certainly acted up to his principle: but, in 1792, having exercised the power of issuing fiats for arbitrary and excessive sums in cases of slander, the subject was brought before Parliament by Mr. Arthur Brown, member for Dublin University; when it was warmly and seriously discussed; and the result of the discussion was a statute to restrict the Irish judges to certain limited sums in such cases.

Lord Clonmell's conduct to the bar was in general very kind to the juniors, and very arrogant to the senior practitioners: and, in consequence of an attack made by him on Mr. Hacket in 1789, a bar meeting was called, to take his Lordship's conduct into consideration; whereupon he thought proper to submit and apologise to the bar by public advertisements in the newspapers. This transaction is mentioned, to show the independence and power of the Irish bar at that period.—The Chief Justice had but one supporter at the meeting—Mr. Marcus Beresford.

but his passions were his slaves, and his cunning was his instrument. He recollected favors received in his obscurity, and, in some instances, had gratitude to requite the obligation: but his avarice and his ostentation contended for the ascendancy: their strife was perpetual, and their victories alternate. In public and in private, he was the same character; and, though a most fortunate man and a successful courtier, he had scarcely a sincere friend, or a disinterested adherent.

This marked contrariety in character and disposition, which distinguished those chief law-officers of government, was equally discernible in almost every other department: the virtues and the talents of Grattan, of Flood, of Yelverton, of Daly, found their contrasts on the same benches; and these two distinguished characters are thus prominently brought forward, to show in the strongest point of view how powerful and insinuating the public feeling of that day must have been, that could finally draw together, in one common cause, personages so opposite and so adverse on almost every political object, and in every national principle.

On a superficial view of the Irish House of Commons in 1779*, it certainly could not afford a very flattering expectation that the

* It may not be un-interesting to contrast the different state of the Irish representation of that day, with it's present appearance in the Imperial Parliament.—The Irish House of Commons then comprised three hundred members—

efforts of the patriots would be either persevering or effectual. Three hundred men — divided into many parties — actuated by so all resident Irishmen, except two or three official persons — of course all, individually, more or less interested in the concerns of the nation — acquainted with it's local affairs — and, from that knowledge, competent to discuss and decide on them. By the act of union, two hundred of those representatives were discharged from their duty, and one hundred considered as an adequate portion of Irishmen to discuss the affairs of Ireland in another kingdom, with five hundred and fifty-four English and Scotch gentlemen, who were in general totally ignorant of every thing appertaining to Ireland, and many of them, from various causes, prejudiced against it's inhabitants.

However, out of this number of a hundred supposed Irishmen, it now appears that more than one sixth are English gentlemen, who have been returned as Irish members ; fourteen of whom have never seen Ireland — possess no property in it — are not even known by name in that country, with whose inhabitants they have never had any intercourse — and are therefore wholly unqualified for the detail of Irish local subjects.

The moderate course taken by the Imperial Parliament in the affair of Mr. Redding, Lords Castlereagh and Clonarchy, and the late Marquis of Sligo, renders it perhaps not indiscreet to promote a parliamentary inquiry respecting the channel, through which those fourteen English gentlemen have found their way into the senate, as representatives for Ireland.—Their names are

ANDREW STRAHAN.

ROBERT PIELÉ.

THOMAS HUGAN.

CLAUDE SCOTT.

GEORGE WALPOLE.

WILLIAM LAMBE.

JAMES STEPHEN.

GEORGE TIERNEY.

CHARLES PACKIN.

ROBERT WILLIAMS.

HENRY MARTIN.

SEYMOUR CONWAY.

WILLIAM WIGRAN.

JAMES CRAIGE.

many jarring interests — and swayed by so many distinct propensities, natural or acquired — seemed to form so discordant an assemblage, as would bid defiance to every attempt toward the establishment of unanimity. — The aristocracy — strong, but mistrustful and cautious — restrained it's partisans from an early avowal of their opinions: — they waited for events; while the country gentlemen, indolent and ineffective — though they hesitated not a moment to declare their sentiments — had no arrangements or system to carry them into execution; and even the members of the bar, though proud and eloquent, were ambitious, and felt that the Government was every way capable of gratifying that ambition. Under these circumstances, the flame of patriotism, however lively, could hardly have been expected to blaze with durable ardor, had not the great body of the people without doors resolutely and universally supported the efforts of their Parliament; without which support, the patriotic struggles in the senate would only have ended in disunion and disappointment.

The crisis, however, now approached, when Ireland was for a moment to rear her head among imperial nations: — strange and unforeseen events began to crowd the annals of the world, and commenced their progress toward those fatal scenes which have since terminated in the fall of European independence: — the established axioms of general polity began to lose their weight among nations; and governments, widely wandering from the fundamental

principles of their own constitutions, seemed carelessly travelling the road to anarchy and revolution.

The rival powers of England and of France—ever jealous, ever insincere—concluding deceptive negotiations by fallacious treaties—doubtful of each other's honor, and dreading each other's prowess—had long stood cautiously at bay—each watching for an unguarded open to give a mortal wound to her adversary—yet each dreading the consequences of an unsuccessful attempt.

Thus circumstanced, the perseverance and successes of America communicated a stimulating impulse to the councils of the French King; and that ill-fated monarch, urged on to his destiny, determined to strike a deadly blow at the pride and the commerce of England, by giving an effectual aid to her revolted colonies. With the usual address, however, of French diplomacy, his cabinet endeavoured to cast the odium of the rupture upon the ministry of England, and, with that view, artfully affected to act upon a defensive principle, when in fact they had determined to become the original aggressors.

The question now came to a speedy issue:—an undecisive engagement with the French fleet in the Channel alarmed and irritated England: every prospect of accommodation vanished; and a declaration of war was issued by the French Government, with a pompous manifesto proclaiming the wanton injuries they had sustained from Great Britain.

Thus plunged into destructive warfare, each nation used their utmost efforts to accomplish their respective purposes. France, through a mistaken policy, determined to establish the independence of America ; while England, equally blind to her true interests, sought to reduce the colonies to the most decisive slavery. A transposition of national principles seemed to have misled the Governments of both countries — despotic France combating with all her powers, to establish the rights of civil liberty — and England exerting all her energies, to enforce a system of tyrannic government — the one marshalling the slaves of her arbitrary power to battle in the cause of pure democracy — the other rallying round an English standard the hired mercenaries of German avarice, to suppress the principles of British freedom — and both Governments soliciting the aid of sanguinary savages, to aggravate the horrors of a Christian war by the scalping-knife and the tomahawk of heathen murderers.

Europe beheld with amazement a combat so unnatural and disgusting : but it would have required a prophetic spirit, to have then foretold that the French throne would be eventually overturned by the principles of those new allies, and would, by the mighty shock of it's fall, shake even the foundations of the British constitution ; though the total prostration of the one, and the ministerial inroads upon the other, would since have fully justified the hazard of that prediction.

Amidst the confusion incident to great and un-expected events, Ireland yet remained unheeded and unthought of: her miseries and her oppressions had hardly engaged the consideration of the British minister. Meanwhile, the Irish people, with a dignified anxiety, contemplated the probable termination of a contest, by the result of which their own destiny must be determined. The subjugation of America would certainly confirm the dependence of Ireland; and she was reduced, by the conduct of England, to the most dreadful and distressing reflexion—that she could obtain her constitutional rights and political justice from her friend only by the complete success and mortifying triumph of her enemy.

Awaiting therefore the decrees of Providence, Ireland steadily surveyed the distant prospect of great and rival empires wantonly lavishing the blood and treasures of their people in a contest fundamentally repugnant to their established principles: but—cautious, moderate, and firm in her conduct—though she wisely determined to avail herself of the crisis to promote the establishment of her legislative independence, yet she retained inviolate her duty to her King, and her fidelity to British connexion:—though she fed the flame of liberty, she kindled not the blaze of licentiousness: while America fought to obtain a separation from Great Britain, Ireland took up arms only to obtain a just participation of her trade and constitution; and

the arrogance of France soon gave her an opportunity of proving the sincerity of her attachment.

To embarrass the offensive measures of England, and make a formidable diversion in favor of America, France manifested an intention of invading Ireland.—In this alarming emergency, Great Britain, from the dispersion of her military force, scattered into many distant stations of the world, and so numerous employed on the continent of America, found it impossible to afford a body of regular troops sufficient to protect Ireland in case of such invasion. Here let us for a moment pause, and dispassionately reflect upon the situation of Great Britain and the conduct of Ireland at this most trying moment: let us survey the increasing imbecillity of the one, and the rising energies of the other; and we must—as posterity certainly will—do justice to the moderation and generosity of a people, whose long and grievous oppressions, if they could not have justified, would at least have palliated, a very different proceeding*.

The state of England during this war became every day more

* It should be recollected, that, when the American rebellion broke out, and after the King's forces had commenced hostilities at Lexington and Boston, subscriptions were publicly opened in London, to assist the American rebels; while, in Ireland, no declarations were made in their favor; nor did the Irish people manifest any such disposition, until the citizens of Belfast were led to follow the example of the Londoners.

difficult and distressing. A discontented people, and an unpopular ministry — an empty treasury, and a grievous taxation — a continental war, and a colonial rebellion — together formed an accumulation of embarrassment, such as Great Britain had seldom, if ever, before experienced. Her forces in America, though occasionally successful, were finally captured or defeated : her fleets, though generally victorious, had not yet attained that irresistible superiority which has since proved the only protection of the British islands. — Ireland, without money, militia, or standing army — without ordnance or fortifications — almost abandoned by England, and reduced to seek the means of her own protection — had to depend solely on the spirit and resources of her own natives : and this critical state of Ireland, which the conduct of Great Britain herself had occasioned, gave the first rise to those celebrated associations, which, though the immediate means of obtaining independence for Ireland, were the remote cause of her finally losing her constitution.

Pressing applications had been made from the north of Ireland to Government for a military protection from the expected invasion : the Government candidly avowed it's incapacity to comply with those requisitions ; and, in order to supply the absence of a regular force, the townsmen and farmers began voluntarily to arm and associate themselves in every quarter of the kingdom. The counties of Wexford, Kilkenny, and Antrim, afforded the first

example of volunteer associations* ; and the same bold and martial spirit gradually diffused itself through every rank and every class of society.

Many inducements prevailed, to fill the ranks of these associations. Self-protection—novelty—the warlike propensities of the Irish people, so long restrained—and personal attachment to their chiefs and leaders, so generally cultivated—were with them the first excitements: but the blending of ranks, and more intimate connexion of the people, which was the immediate consequence of a general military system, quickly effected an extensive and marked revolution in the minds and manners of the entire nation—an important and extraordinary change, of which the gradations became every day more conspicuously discernible. The primary stimulus of the Irish farmer was only that which he felt in common with every other animated being—the desire of self-preservation:—he associated against invasion, because he heard that it would be his ruin: but his intercourse with the higher ranks opened the road to better information. He soon learned that the Irish people were deprived of political rights, and that his country had endured political injuries: his ideas became

* The honor of commencing the volunteer associations was claimed by several counties: but Colonel George Ogle's corps in the county of Wexford, and Colonel Butler's (afterwards Lord Ormond's) regiment of Kilkenny Rangers, were supposed to have been the first corps well armed and disciplined in Ireland.

enlarged, and quickly embraced more numerous and prouder objects: he began, for the first time, to know his own importance to the state; and, as knowledge advanced, the principles of constitutional independence were better understood, and more sedulously cultivated. The Irish peasant now assumed a different rank, and a higher character:—familiarised with arms, and more intimate with his superiors, he every day felt his love of liberty increased: the spirit at length became general and enthusiastic; and, in less time than could have been supposed from the commencement of these associations, the whole surface of the island was seen covered with a self-raised host of patriot soldiers.

In the formation of those armed associations, the long-established distinctions between the Protestant and the Catholic could not be altogether forgotten. Many of the penal laws were still in full force: Catholics were prohibited by statute from bearing arms in Ireland*; and, from the rooted prejudices against allowing to that sect any civil or military power whatever, strong objections arose to their admission into those armed bodies. The Catholics, however, were humble and submissive: they neither took offence

* The Irish papists were restrained from bearing arms, and were subject to severe searches and punishments for disobedience, by the statutes of

7th WILLIAM III.

13th GEORGE II.

15th and 16th GEORGE III.

nor even showed any jealousy at this want of confidence : on the contrary, with their money and their exhortations, they zealously assisted in encouraging and forwarding those very associations, into which they themselves had been refused admission. Their calmness, their patriotism, their humility—connected with their manifest disposition to promote the political views of their Protestant brethren—gained them many friends among the Irish gentry : a relaxation of sentiment, with respect to their admission, appeared to be gaining ground : but it was not until the volunteers had assumed a deliberative capacity, and met, as armed citizens, to discuss political questions, that the necessity of engaging the whole population of the country in this cause of independence became distinctly obvious. Though the majority of the volunteers at all times seemed indisposed to associate in arms with Catholic soldiers, reason at length prevailed, in many instances, over bigotry : the members of the church of Rome were cordially received into some corps ; and a few examples were seen of volunteer associations, whose ranks were entirely filled with persons of that persuasion. On this subject, however, the gentry of Ireland were never unanimous. Those who foresaw that a general association of the Irish people was essential to the attainment of their constitutional objects, endeavoured to reconcile the schisms of sectarian jealousy by calm and rational observations : they argued, that religious feuds had, in all countries, proved

subversive of national prosperity, but to none more decidedly fatal than to modern Ireland;—that the true interest of the Catholic and of the Protestant was substantially the same; they breathed the same air, tilled the same soil, and had equal rights and claims to the participation of liberty;—that they were endowed by nature with equal powers and faculties, intellectual and corporeal;—that they worshipped the same God—the truths and doctrines of revealed religion equally constituting the basis of their social duties, and the foundation of their religious tenets; and the principles of virtue and of morality being equally inculcated from their pulpits, and propagated at their altars. “Why, then,” they asked, “should a few theological subtilties, whose mysterious uncertainties lay far beyond the reach of human determination, and were altogether unnecessary to the arrangements of municipal institutions—why should they distract a nation, which, to become free, should become unanimous? why should they excite controversies so strongly tainted with fanatic phrensy, that no personal insult or aggravated injury, no breach of moral tie or of honorable contract, could rouse rancor more acrimonious, or animosity more unrelenting, than that which originated solely from theoretic distinctions upon inexplicable subjects? as if Irishmen were bound to promote the happiness of their neighbours in a future state, by destroying their comforts and disturbing their tranquillity in the present!”

It was also observed, that, although this strange insanity might have existed in remote and dark ages, when the disciples of every new sect proclaimed themselves the meritorious murderers of the old—when Christian chiefs assailed the pagan power, only to make new proselytes to their own errors, and victims to their own intolerance—and though, in such unhappy times, Ireland might have partaken of the general madness, and, without peculiar disgrace, have participated in the infirmities of Europe—yet, when the progress of civilisation had opened the eyes and enlarged the understanding of the people—when the voice of rational liberty loudly called for the unanimous exertion of every sect in the common cause of protection and of independence—it was full time to discard those destructive prejudices, which had so long and so effectually restrained the rights and retarded the prosperity of the Irish nation.

On the other hand, the obstinate partisans of the Protestant interest—though they wished for the co-operation of the Catholic body, as a desirable, if not an indispensable, auxiliary in a political view—were nevertheless apprehensive of the consequences which seemed likely to result from such an association. They conceived that the aid of the Catholics might be too dearly purchased;—that the peace of Ireland for the last eighty years had been preserved by the absolute supremacy of their own sect, and the total depression and political incapacities of the

other;—that a multitude, who had been so long and so rigorously retained in subjection by the operation of penal laws—if they should feel their chains loosened, and should become associated and armed for one object—might naturally be led to extend their views, and to convert their arms and their discipline to a different purpose—and would, as a reward for their fidelity and assistance, solicit at least, if not boldly demand, a liberation from their shackles, and a total abolition of those very restrictions and incapacities, which, by their continued influence during so many years, had constituted the security of the state, and the tranquillity of the nation.

In fact, the Protestant gentry had been so long accustomed to calculate the physical by the military strength of the country, and were so blindly devoted to the arbitrary system of their ancestors, that many of them could not brook the idea of risking their own supremacy by Catholic participation—and had so strangely confounded their conceptions of tolerated religion with temporal government, that they considered a system of concession to the one sect, as necessarily destructive to the political ascendancy of the other.

A combination of other irritating circumstances, still more painful to the feelings of the Irish Catholics, evinced the singular moderation, the sound wisdom, and the steady patriotism, which distinguished that sect during this trying period: nor can

any historic incident more clearly illustrate the inestimable value of unanimity to an oppressed people, than a contrasted exhibition of the independent spirit displayed by the Catholics in 1782, when they acquired a constitution by their firmness, and of their degenerate conduct in 1800, when they lost that constitution through their divisions and their servility*.

In 1779, the harsh operation of the penal statutes was aggravated by the triumphs of Protestant supremacy, which were then celebrated throughout Ireland with all the zeal of Bacchanalian orgies. A system of political idolatry seemed to have infatuated the whole of the Protestant population; and their devotion, even to the statue and to the memory of the dead King William, appeared as powerfully efficacious as their loyal attachment to the living monarch, in kindling the fervor of their enthusiasm.

* It will be truly interesting to compare the noble resolutions of the Catholics in 1782 with those of Doctor Lanigan, the titular bishop of Ossory, at the head of a Catholic committee in the chapel at Kilkenny, in June, 1799; on which occasion, many of the inhabitants, and several of his own clergy, were seduced to sign an abject and adulating resolution in favor of a legislative union—a resolution, dictated by the obvious expectation of acquiring religious toleration at the expense of civil independence. The crime was committed: but the reward has been denied.

Thrice every year* the Irish Protestants celebrated the birth and victories of the Prince of Orange in a manner peculiarly calculated to revive the animosity of their Catholic fellow subjects. The sanguinary triumph of William over the native inhabitants of Ireland, the expulsion of their King, the confiscation of their estates, and the downfall of their families, suggested mortifying

* The first of July (the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne), the 12th of July (that of the victory at Aughrim), and the 4th of November (King William's birthday), are celebrated with great rejoicings in Ireland: and, as a further proof of their attachment to British connexion, the Protestants of Dublin celebrate likewise with great solemnity the anniversary of Guy Fawkes's attempt to blow up King James the First at Westminster in the seventeenth century. On the former days, the equestrian statue of King William in College-green is painted orange and white, and his shoulders covered with an old silk mantle: his horse also is duly caparisoned; and an orange wreath is twined round his majesty's temples.

Several processions, civil and military, then march round the ornamented statue. The viceroy, and the officers of state, the recorder and corporations of Dublin, &c. occasionally join in the procession. The garrison, both Protestants and Catholics, thrice fire a *feu-de-joie* in honor of the day; and (as an Irish print described a celebrated commemoration) the evening generally concludes "with an illumination or bonfire, a riot, and other demonstrations of joy."

Long custom so effectually wears away the acute edge of human sensibility, that numbers of the Catholics themselves, a few years since, frequently joined in the festivity: and, whatever they might have felt, they showed no indications of displeasure or jealousy at these rejoicings.

reflexions to the posterity of the injured sufferers: but a strong sense of national interest at this period entirely absorbed their jealousies, and smothered those indignant feelings which might naturally have been roused by the injudicious celebration of their defeats and their misfortunes. Clinging to the cause of Ireland, and wisely confiding in the generosity of the Protestants, the Catholics with patience and with prudence awaited the approach of those events which have since restored to them a great proportion of their civil and religious liberty.

CHAP. III.

Character of the Irish People misrepresented and misunderstood in England.—

Irish Representatives in the United Parliament — Causes of their apparent inferiority. — Irish Character defamed by English Writers. — English System of Policy towards Ireland. — Characteristic Sketch of the Country in general. — Character of the Irish Peasant. — His Condition in 1780. — The Gentry. — The Nobility. — The Clergy. — Non-importation Agreement against British Manufactures. — Progress of the Volunteers. — Their principal Leaders. — Character of Sir John Parnel. — General Effects of volunteering upon the People of Ireland.

BEFORE the progress of the Irish Volunteers is particularly detailed, or the ultimate objects which they had in view, the genuine character of the people among whom so extraordinary an association originated, should be clearly developed and perfectly understood; as many important events in Irish history would appear obscure and un-accountable, without a due knowledge of the national character—a character, ever misconceived or misrepresented in England, because the persons by whom the picture was drawn, were generally either too ignorant or too interested to draw it with fidelity; and so little of intimate intercourse had subsisted between the two countries, that the people of England were in general as un-acquainted with the real disposi-

tions and habits of the Irish, as with those of any nation upon the European continent.

It was therefore impossible that England should judiciously govern a people with whose feelings she was wont to trifle, and with whose natural and political character she was so imperfectly acquainted: nor can she ever effectually acquire the necessary knowledge on those important points, except from bold and faithful representations, founded on decided facts, and fortified by honest reasoning, which may convince her, that Ireland, though formed by nature for her sister, was never intended for her servant—and that, within her own bosom, she possesses powers, treasures, and resources, yet un-explored by England, but which, if kindly cultivated and liberally encouraged *, would contribute

* There cannot be a stronger proof of the mis-application of public money, and disregard to the improvement of Ireland, than a consideration that the port and harbour of Dublin—the annual grave of British seamen and Irish commerce—could be rendered accessible, safe, and commodious, at the expense of little more than one half-million, while a sum of little less than eight millions of the public money, and eight or nine thousand lives, have been wantonly expended, under the direction of an Irishman (Lord Castlereagh), for the temporary destruction of the dock and basin of a fishing-town of Holland; and that several acts of the Legislature have, within these few years, been passed, to improve the already safe, capacious, and magnificent port of London, while the miserable and dangerous harbour of Dublin has been altogether disregarded, with the single exception of an imperfect attempt to make an anchorage for the British packets at Howth, eight miles from the metropolis.

more strength and benefit to the latter, than she has ever heretofore derived, or perhaps ever yet merited, from the connexion.

Whenever, therefore, England wishes to be truly acquainted with the natural character, the real state, and the abundant resources of the Irish people, she should first explore the channels through which she has heretofore derived her imperfect information: she should seriously reflect whether such representations have yet tended to promote those measures best calculated to attach, either to her interest or even to their own, a brave, a generous, but a jealous nation—or whether she has been led to pursue a narrow and crooked policy, utterly un-adapted to either of those important purposes. England should also especially consider, how far representations, transmitted from Ireland to her cabinet, have in general proved, by their results, to have been perfectly correct, or eventually judicious. Such representations must, from their nature, be frequently defective. It is not through the temporary and fugitive intercourse of British Viceroy's that Irish character can be accurately learned, or duly appreciated. Limited as must necessarily be the intercourse of men in high stations with the population of a country, the advantages of even that limited intercourse are frequently rendered still more contracted by the address of official dependents, as it were walling in their governors, and raising to themselves a fictitious importance, by applying appropriate representations, and acquiring exclusive

audience—a system not difficult to be established, since Ireland has ceased to enjoy the power of open investigation in her own Parliament. Official knowledge of Irish character, therefore, becomes confined, as general intercourse is restricted; and, from the convivialities of a corporation banquet, the adulatory addresses of a village, or the sumptuous entertainments of a speculating nobleman, is generally collected the whole fund of information acquired through the progress of viceregal excursions. Yet all official representations are of course considered by British ministers to be absolutely orthodox, while those of the wisest personages of Ireland, if opposed to or even unconnected with the objects of the existing administration of Great Britain, too often meet with a cold, if not a supercilious, reception.

If Great Britain should seek for an insight into Irish character through the talents and the conduct of the representatives of Ireland embodied in the Imperial Parliament, and, as public men, proper subjects of observation and criticism, she would equally fail to attain that knowledge.—The natural character of a people appears, with all its bearings, only within their own country. Their qualities are always superficially affected by the habits of new society; and their most pointed and marked peculiarities, new modelled by foreign intercourse, cease to represent the true character of the people, and deceive the observer by a fallacious surface. The general failure of the most eloquent men of Ireland, when re-

moved into the British senate, strongly exemplifies that observation:—introduced into an assembly more awful, but to them far less interesting, than their own Parliament, they became mingled with strangers, whose manners were less open, and whose minds less ardent and fruitful, but more suspicious and reserved. Undervaluing the language of eloquence, as un-adapted to the compass of common, plain, direct conception, the Irish member became almost ashamed of his talents: elocution appeared bombastic: a social instinct imperceptibly drew down the Irish orator to the British level; and, without being able to acquire a new character, he frequently lost the finest features of his own. Many singular examples have proved this theory: men of superior talents have become cold: those of inferior abilities are become silent: both suppose in themselves an inferiority which does not really exist; and both feel a want of confidence, uncongenial to their nature. When genuine Irish character therefore is sought for, but little of it's energy can be discovered, and few of it's qualities distinguished, in the language, the manner, and the inactivity of the Irish representatives*: and, if an Irishman becomes a British minister or an officer of the Government, the knowledge of cha-

* Mr. Grattan, in his eloquent but severe pamphlet in answer to Lord Clare's speech in the House of Lords in 1800, beautifully accounts for Mr. Flood's inferiority in the British Parliament:—"He was" (says Mr. Grattan) "a tree of the forest, too great and too old to be transplanted at fifty."

acter through him is removed to a still greater distance. It would be doing a flagrant injustice to any country, to determine the national character of it's people by the public conduct of it's ministers.

The only criterion, by which the character of the Irish can be justly ascertained, is a minute and impartial survey of their collective demeanour throughout all the windings of difficult times and embarrassing situations, and a diligent comparison of the theory founded on that general observation, with acts of public conduct, and private anecdotes of individual intercourse. It is impossible, however, to determine on one character for all ranks of society in any country: the influence of high education generally disguises many of the natural qualities of the human mind, so as to bring a great proportion of the well-educated people of all nations to nearly one common level, or one class of society: but, from that number, comparatively so small, we cannot draw a general character for the aggregate population of the country.

To attain a just conception of the remote causes of two great and repugnant revolutions in Ireland within eighteen years, we must, with deep and accurate research, investigate that general character: we must view the ranks of which society is there composed, as well as their proportions and their influence on each other; and, in the peculiarities and ardency of that character, will

be clearly discovered the true sources of many extraordinary events: it will evidently appear, that, to the foibles of that unfortunate nation, worked upon by art, and imposed upon by policy — and not to native crimes or peculiar views — are attributable the frequency of her miseries and the consummation of her misfortune.

The Irish people have been as little known, as they have been grossly defamed, to the rest of Europe*: nor is it from what they have done, but from the means by which they have been seduced or goaded to do it, that an impartial world will judge of their intellect, or appreciate the value or the disposition of their country.

The monstrous and incredible fictions of ignorant and foreign authors have, from the earliest ages, been employed, to excite the contempt of the English nation toward the Irish people†. The

* The character, attributed to the Irish people by celebrated writers in the dark ages, is very remarkable.

STRABO, book iv.—“ They live on human flesh, eating to great excess: they “ think it a duty to eat the bodies of their deceased parents.”

POMPONIUS MELA, book iii.—“ It's inhabitants are uncivilised, ignorant of every “ virtue, and destitute of every piety.”

SOLINUS, c. xxiii.—“ When they gain a victory, they first drink the blood of “ the slain. They make no distinction between right and wrong.”

† Lord Redesdale, one of the most respectable among the modern intolerants,

lengths, to which English writers have proceeded in pursuit of this object, would surpass all belief, were not the facts proved by histories written under the immediate eye and sanction of Irish Governments — histories replete with falsehood, which, combined

has given to this subject a more ingenious and novel construction, than any of his predecessors.

In his Lordship's celebrated Letters to the Earl of Fingall, he emphatically asserts that obedience to a Protestant Prince is so fundamentally incompatible with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland, that PRACTICAL loyalty to a Protestant King cannot be expected among the Irish Catholics, inasmuch as their church considers "*Protestants as Heathens, and the King as a rebel.*" (2d letter, pages 11 and 12.) But, without any irrelevant discussion of religious tenets, the pages of authentic history fortunately protect the character of the Irish population, and display incontrovertible facts so completely subversive of his Lordship's hypothesis, as to render comment almost unnecessary.

Lord Redesdale should have recollected, that, in 1646, the Irish Catholics, almost at the expense of their own extermination, defended their Protestant King (Charles I.) against the English regicides: — he should have recollected, that, though two rebellions raged in Scotland and England in favor of a Popish Pretender in the years ~~1712~~¹⁷¹⁵ and 1745, yet the Irish Catholics remained loyal and tranquil during the whole of both rebellions, and supported their Protestant King against his Protestant rebels; — and that, while Scotch and English blood flowed in torrents upon the scaffolds and at the gibbets, not one individual in Ireland was found guilty of disloyalty. — His Lordship should have recollected that the rebellion of 1798 was in fact a democratic, not a religious insurrection, and acquired it's Popish complexion only from this accidental circumstance, that, in the parts where it raged, the

with the still more mischievous misrepresentations of modern writers, form all together a mass of the most cruel calumnies that ever weighed down the character of a meritorious people.

majority of the population happened to be Papists, influenced by the ignorance and superstition in which that people lay overwhelmed and sunk under the weight of the penal code enacted against them by the policy of England.

The seeds of that insurrection were first sown by the Presbyterians of the North of Ireland, and particularly by some political societies, so innocent at their commencement, that Lord Castlereagh was publicly stated in the Irish Parliament to have been a secretary to one of them. — The insurrection of 1798 was headed by Protestant gentry; and the majority of the executive directory were Protestants. This rebellion was founded upon republican principles, which had then more or less infected England and Scotland, and almost every country in Europe, in common with Ireland — a fact, with which Lord Redesdale was perfectly acquainted, as appears by the report of the secret committee of the House of Commons of England in 1797, authenticated by his Lordship, and stating it's commencement to have been in Scotland.

The trials also for high treason in England in 1797, on which Lord Redesdale himself made a very conspicuous display — the atrocious attempt on his Majesty's sacred person in St. James's Park — and the subsequent conspiracy of Colonel Despard and his associates in London — should have induced his Lordship to admit candidly that the spirit of disaffection, which his letters would attribute almost exclusively to the principles of popery in Ireland, had, at the same period, manifested itself at least as mischievously in Great Britain, where those principles did not exist, and could not operate: and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act in England, promoted by Lord Redesdale himself, proved that the Protestants of

This system however was not without it's meaning. From the reign of Elizabeth, the policy of England has been to keep Ireland in a state of internal division : perfect unanimity among her inhabitants has been falsely considered as likely to give her a popu-

England were then as much suspected of disloyalty by his Lordship, as the Catholics of Ireland: otherwise he would not have resorted to a measure, which nothing but the most imminent danger from secret and extensive disaffection could ever have justified.

The insurrection in Ireland in 1803 (in which Lord Kilwarden, the chief justice, was unfortunately sacrificed) was partial, democratic, and purely republican, and derived it's importance rather from the supineness of public officers than from the number or religion of the conspirators. It was headed by two Protestant gentlemen — Mr. Emmet in Dublin, and Mr. Russel in the North — both of whom were executed for the treason.

His Lordship's ideas, therefore, of radical disloyalty in Ireland, as connected with the established religions of the population, were highly erroneous — detracting from the character of almost an entire people. This language also coming from so exalted a character as keeper of his Majesty's conscience and his great seals of Ireland — combining at once the highest judicial and ministerial authority in the country — is too weighty an imputation to pass disregarded. — A doctrine, virtually asserting, that, until four fifths of the Irish people renounce their religion, abjure their tenets, and repudiate their clergy, they must be out of the pale of English confidence, is a denunciation injudicious and impolitic, and seriously derogatory to the administration of Marquis Cornwallis, who so repeatedly returned his thanks to the same Catholic clergy for their loyal and dutiful principles, when his Excel-

lation and a power almost incompatible with subjection: and there are not wanting natives of Ireland*, who, impressed with that

lency had artfully seduced that feeble and inconsistent body to address him in favor of a Legislative Union.

Lord Redesdale should surely have hesitated, before he suffered such his opinion to be published in London (by Messrs. Cadell and Davies), and circulated throughout every part of the empire. His Lordship — whose good intentions the author does not impeach, but whose ignorance of the Irish people he laments, and whose mixture of theology and politics he condemns — should cautiously have reflected on the common nature of mankind; and he would have perceived, that — as individuals, when they have lost their reputation by calumny, frequently become careless of their future actions — so a people, if blackened by unfounded aspersions, may become equally and dangerously careless of theirs. To refute therefore his Lordship's thesis, to up-hold the Irish character, and convince the people of Great Britain of the danger and fallacy of this doctrine, must be an object of importance in every point of view, not only to Ireland, but to the whole British empire. Without such refutation, the Irish must ever continue a degraded and suspected people: and to that purpose a future chapter of this Memoir is exclusively appropriated.

* Sir Richard Musgrave's History of the Irish Insurrection of 1798 is peculiarly calculated to calumniate Ireland, and to perpetuate that internal discord so ruinous to her interests — a work, which must be read with unbounded disgust by every Irishman who values the tranquillity, the honor, or the character of his country — an unconnected compilation of exaggerated truths and equivocating falsehoods — representing four millions of the Irish population as just four millions of tolerated traitors — defaming the place of his nativity, deceiving the British people, and propagating the doctrines of intolerance in the language of a fanatic. Throughout

erroneous idea, zealously plunge into the same doctrine, as if they could best prove their loyalty to the King by vilifying their

the whole work, Sir Richard triumphantly celebrates the horrors of military execution, and aggravates the mischiefs of sectarian animosity — stamping upon Ireland the false character of an abandoned and incorrigible island, only to be governed by the sword, or held in allegiance by the shackle — thus deterring every cautious and civilised nation from confidence in, or commerce or connexion with, his native country.

The mischiefs of this publication have been incalculable; and so strongly were it's demerits impressed even upon Marquis Cornwallis, that his Excellency, by a public advertisement in the news-papers, disclaimed the dedication which it's author had prefixed to his volume, and addressed to his Lordship. This dishonor, however, was very soon afterward amply compensated by the appointment of Sir Richard to the office of Collector of the customs of Dublin; which station he still holds, as a registered memorial of his vote, his history, his disgrace, and his compensation.

Sir Richard's compilation is, in some instances, paralleled by a history of the Irish rebellion in 1641, published by Sir William Temple, who also quotes a variety of affidavits, to authenticate his narrative. — A few extracts from those affidavits will prove what destructive impressions may be made, even upon sensible minds, by religious bigotry, and to what lengths even respectable historians have gone, to support their prejudices against the Irish people. Sir William Temple was an English gentleman of great supposed veracity; and therefore — making due allowance for the progress of civilisation — Sir Richard's history may not be unworthy of an association with Sir William's. But, to prove beyond argument the unqualified mischief of Sir Richard's literary talents, a second book, entitled an *Address to the Catholic Clergy of Ireland*, published by him in 1804, asserts, that

country.—Not only the distinct classes of society, but also the inhabitants of the several provinces of Ireland, were distinguished

“ any person, who is acquainted with the rooted animosity of the *Popish multitude* to the Protestants, and to a connexion with Great Britain, must be convinced that *nothing whatsoever can increase or diminish it.*” This declaration operates as a fire-brand in Ireland: and, if such doctrines were tolerated, they would tend, beyond all measure, to exasperate those irritated feelings, which every government, that has the interest of the empire at heart, should endeavour to suppress or to conciliate.

N. B. It is observable that the able and constitutional work of William Molyneux was ordered by the British Parliament to be burned by the hands of the common executioner, and that Sir Richard’s libel upon the Irish population remains unstigmatised by any act of the Legislature.

*Deposition of Catherine, the relict of William Cook, of Armagh, carpenter,
(Sir William Temple’s History, page 11,)*

“ Who deposeth and saith, that, on the 20th day of December, 1641, she saw
“ a spirit or vision in the shape of a man, in the river at Portadown bridge, county
“ Armagh, bolt upright in the river, breast-high, with hands uplifted; and that said
“ spirit or vision stood in that position until the latter end of the lent following, in
“ the place *where the Protestants were murdered*; and that, when the English army
“ came to that country, the said spirit or vision vanished.
“ Sworn, the 29th day of January, 1643.”

Deposition of Elizabeth Price, wife of Captain Rice Price,

“ Who deposeth and saith, that deponent, with other women, went at twilight
“ to the bridge of Portadown, where the Protestants were murdered, to see an

from each other by different characteristic qualities. Leinster, the pale of the ancient English settlers — Connaught, the retreat

“ apparition said to appear there; and saith, that then and there appeared to depose
“ nent a spirit or vision, assuming the shape of a woman, high and upright in the
“ water, naked, with elevated and closed hands, her hair hanging down, very white.
“ Her eyes seemed to twinkle; and her skin appeared as white as snow; which
“ spirit seemed to stand upright, repeating the words, *Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!*
“ Sworn, the 29th January, 1642.”

Deposition of the Rev. Robert Maxwell, Archdeacon of Down, sworn before Henry Brereton, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace,

“ Deposeth, that, at the siege of Augher, the Irish never killed *English* beasts,
“ but cut collops out of them whilst alive, so letting them roar till they had no
“ more flesh left on their backs; so that an *English* beast would live two or three
“ days together in that state.
“ Sworn, the 20th August, 1642.”

Deposition of Anne, the wife of John Slarney, of the silver-works, Tipperary,

“ Deposeth and saith, that her husband was murdered, hacked, hewed, slashed,
“ stabbed, and cut to pieces. He had thirty grievous wounds, viz. some through
“ his breast, and also ten mortal wounds in his head, three in his belly, and four in
“ his arms.
“ Sworn, 10th of February, 1643, before Henry Jones and Henry Brereton, two
“ of his Majesty's Justices of the peace.”

Sir Richard Musgrave seems to have adopted this latter affidavit of Sir William Temple's as a precedent for many of his authenticated murders, and

of the aboriginal Irish — Munster, the general abode of Irish and of foreigners — and Ulster, the residence of Scottish colonists — were inhabited by people nearly as distinct from each other in natural disposition, as the sources whence they respectively derived their origin*.

leaves a divided world to determine which is the more liberal or enlightened historian.

These specimens of Irish history by English authors should open the mind of Great Britain to the misrepresentation so constantly and uniformly lavished upon the character of the Irish people. When it is proved that the British Government of Ireland, so late as the year 1642, resorted to the culpable expedient of procuring a gentleman of rank to insult the understandings of both nations by publishing affidavits of ghosts and apparitions calling for *revenge*, in order to give some color to the military executions on the Irish peasantry, which immediately followed the appearance of those spectres — such conduct must excite a just suspicion against English commentators upon Irish transactions.

* The first landing of the English in Ireland under Strongbow was in the province of Leinster; and a certain district, called the English pale, was, for a great length of time, possessed by those settlers. It was extremely singular, that, when Englishmen had resided any considerable time in Ireland, they began to adopt the Irish customs and habits, and were designated by their countrymen by the title of "the degenerate English of the pale." — One district in the county of Wexford (the barony of Forth) still retains many of the ancient customs of the old English settlers.

Queen Elizabeth, and, after her, Cromwell, almost depopulated Ireland by military executions. The latter drove the original natives of Ireland across the river Shannon, and cooped them up in the province of Connaught, the most barren and

The class of wealthy industrious yeomen, which has contributed so largely to form the independent manner and character of the English pale, was much too scantily interspersed throughout the other parts of Ireland:—there the ranks of society were more distinct, and the links of their connexion wider and more distant: the higher classes were too proud, and the lower too

uncultivated in the kingdom. Thus secluded, and totally under the guidance of their priests and the influence of their superstition, they continued far behind the other provinces in every point of improvement.—The greater proportion of the inhabitants of that province are Catholics; and they retain the peculiarities of the original Irish character much more strongly impressed than the people of the other provinces. The language, universally spoken among the lower orders, is Irish: but, in some parts, they speak Latin with great fluency.

Munster, situate on the borders of the Atlantic, had a considerable intercourse with foreigners; and that part which is on the sea-coast, was frequented by foreign merchants. Kilkenny, in the centre of that province, was occasionally the seat of Government; and parliaments were held there.—Munster contains by far the best lands and the finest peasantry in Ireland.

Ulster, opposite to the Scottish coast, is peopled principally by persons of Scottish origin, who had, from time to time during the civil wars of Ireland, been brought over as auxiliaries from their own country: and, finding Ireland a more fruitful region than that which had given them birth, they here fixed their abode—a practice still very prevalent with the Scots. They are more industrious, and more regular in all their dealings, than the inhabitants of the other provinces.—Ulster is more populous, full of manufacturing towns, and a thriving people. They are Protestant dissenters in point of religion.

humble, to admit the possibility of an intimate association, without the interposition of unforeseen occurrences.

The Irish peasantry, who necessarily composed the great body of the population, combined in their character many of those singular and repugnant qualities which peculiarly designate the people of different nations; and this remarkable contrariety of characteristic traits pervaded almost the whole current of their natural dispositions. Laborious, yet lazy—domestic, but dissipated—accustomed to wants in the midst of plenty—they submit to hardships without repining, and bear the severest privations with stoic fortitude. The sharpest wit, and the shrewdest subtlety, which abound in the character of the Irish peasant, generally lie concealed under the semblance of dulness, or the appearance of simplicity; and his language, replete with the keenest humour, possesses an idiom of equivocation, which never fails successfully to evade a direct answer to an unwelcome question.

Inquisitive, artful, and penetrating, the Irish peasant learns mankind without extensive intercourse, and has an instinctive knowledge of the world, without mingling in it's societies: and never, in any other instance, did there exist an illiterate and uncultivated people who could display so much address and so much talent in the ordinary transactions of life, as the Irish peasantry.

Too hasty or too dilatory in the execution of their projects, they are sometimes frustrated by their impatience and impetuosity: at other times they fail through their indolence and procrastination; and, without possessing the extreme vivacity of the French or the cool phlegm of the English character, they feel all the inconvenience of the one, and experience the disadvantages of the other.

In his anger furious without revenge, and violent without animosity — turbulent and fantastic in his dissipation — ebriety discloses the inmost recesses of the Irish peasant's character. His temper irascible, but good-natured — his mind coarse and vulgar, yet sympathetic and susceptible of every impression — he yields too suddenly to the paroxysms of momentary impulse, or the seduction of pernicious example; and an implicit confidence in the advice of a false friend, or the influence of an artful superior, not unfrequently leads him to perpetrate the enormities of vice, while he believes he is performing the exploits of virtue*.

* This was particularly observable during the insurrection of 1798. Misled by bad advisers, the Irish peasants learned a most mischievous doctrine, that, "*if the object was good, the means of achieving it were immaterial.*" This desperate principle was the foundation of many enormities. It was to be lamented, that the same conduct was often pursued by the other party, without the pretence of such a doctrine.

The Irish peasant has, at all periods, been peculiarly distinguished for unbounded but indiscriminate hospitality, which, though naturally devoted to the necessities of a friend, is never denied by him even to the distresses of an enemy *. To be in want or in misery, is the best recommendation to his disinterested protection : his food, his bed, his raiment, are equally the stranger's and his own ; and, the deeper the distress, the more welcome is the sufferer to the peasant's cottage.

His attachments to his kindred and connexions are of the strongest nature. The social duties are intimately blended with the natural uncorrupted disposition of an Irish peasant ; and, though covered with rags, oppressed with poverty, and perhaps with hunger, the finest specimens of generosity and heroism are to be found in his singular but un-equalled character.

A martial spirit and a love of desultory warfare is indigenous to the Irish people. Battle is their pastime : — whole parishes and districts form themselves into parties, which they denominate factions : — they meet, by appointment, at their country

* It has been remarked that the English and Irish people form their judgement of strangers very differently : — an Englishman suspects a stranger to be a rogue, till he finds that he is an honest man : the Irishman conceives every person to be an honest man, till he finds him out to be a rogue : and this accounts for the very striking difference in their conduct and hospitality to strangers. — The Irish is the more liberal, but the English by far the wiser, maxim.

fairs: there they quarrel without a cause, and fight without an object; and, having indulged their propensity and bound up their wounds, they return satisfied to their own homes, generally without anger, and frequently in perfect friendship with each other*. — It is a melancholy reflexion, that the successive Go-

* Natural cruelty has been imputed to the Irish peasant by persons who either are un-acquainted with his character, or wish to misrepresent it. — National character can never be drawn with justice from incidents which take place amidst all the rage and violence of civil war or religious phrensy. The barbarities, committed in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798, were not all on the one side: and at least as many persons were sacrificed in cold blood by the musket or sabre of the soldiery, as by the pike or blunderbuss of the rebel. But all those enormities are incidental to civil wars, and should never be brought up as a criterion, whereby to judge of the national character of any people. The allegation of historic facts to elucidate disputed points can never be considered as a reflexion on the nation where those facts have taken place: and, when we look back to the reign of Queen Mary, and see five bishops, twenty-one beneficed clergymen, fifty-five women, and four children, besides a multitude of gentlemen, &c. deliberately burned alive in England within three years, as well might England be branded with the general character of natural cruelty on account of these inhuman deeds, as Ireland on account of those committed during the excesses of warfare and hot blood. In England, during a peaceable year (1794), two hundred and eighteen persons received sentence of death, of whom forty-four were for *murder*. In Ireland, during a troublesome year (1797), eighty-seven received sentence of death, of whom only eighteen were for murder: so that England seems to have committed her full proportion of crimes, and more than her proportion of murders; which does not

vernments of Ireland should have been so long and so obstinately blind to the real interest of the country, as to conceive it more expedient to attempt the fruitless task of suppressing the national spirit by legal severity, than to adopt a system of national instruction and general industry, which, by affording employment to their faculties, might give to the minds of the people a proper tendency, and a useful and peaceable direction.

In general, the Irish are rather impetuously brave, than steadily persevering: their onsets are furious, and their retreats precipitate: but even death has for them no terrors, when they firmly believe that their cause is meritorious*. Though exquisitely artful in the stratagems of warfare, yet, when actually in

substantiate the charge of cruelty, with which the Irish character has been exclusively aspersed. The murders in Ireland, moreover, are very different from those in England: many murders in Ireland occur in the heat of their battles: most of those in England are perpetrated in cold blood.

* The heroic fortitude, with which a multitude of Irish peasants suffered the punishment of death during the insurrection of 1798, was very remarkable. They went with cheerfulness to the place of execution, and often exhorted the spectators to follow their example. They had not an equal fortitude in suffering slow pain; and very few of them could restrain their groans under the operation of flogging, though they evidently endeavoured to suppress them. With a number of peasants at Carlow, who, by order of Colonel Stephen Mahon, were first very severely flogged, and then hanged, the expectation of death seemed a consolation for the pain of living; and they met their last punishment with an obvious gratification.

battle, their discretion vanishes before their impetuosity ; and — the most gregarious people under heaven — they rush forward in a crowd with tumultuous ardor, and without foresight or reflexion whether they are advancing to destruction or to victory.

An enthusiastic attachment to the place of their nativity is another striking trait of the Irish character, which neither time nor absence, prosperity nor adversity, can obliterate or diminish. Wherever an Irish peasant was born, there he wishes to die ; and, however successful in acquiring wealth or rank in distant places, he returns with fond affection to renew his intercourse with the friends and companions of his youth and his obscurity.

Illiterate and ignorant as the Irish peasantry are, they cannot be expected to understand the complicated theory and fundamental principles of civil government, and therefore are too easily imposed upon by the fallacious reasoning of insinuating agitators : but their natural political disposition is evidently aristocratic. From the traditionary history of their ancient kings, their minds early imbibe a warm love of monarchy ; while their courteous, civil, and humble demeanour to the higher orders of society proves their ready deference to rank, and their voluntary submission to superiority : and, when the rough and independent, if not insolent, address of the English farmer to his superiors is compared with the native humble courtesy of the Irish peasant,

it would be the highest injustice to charge the latter with a natural disposition toward the principles of democracy.

An innate spirit of insubordination to the laws has been strongly charged upon the Irish peasantry: but an illiterate people—to whom the punishment of crimes appears rather as a sacrifice to revenge than a measure of prevention—can never have the same deference to the law, as those who are instructed in the principles of justice, and taught to recognise it's equality. It has, however, been uniformly admitted by every impartial writer on the affairs of Ireland, that a spirit of strict justice has ever characterised the Irish peasant*. Convince him, by plain and impartial reasoning, that he is wrong; and he generally withdraws from the judgement-seat, if not with cheerfulness, at least with submission: but, to make him respect the laws, he must be satisfied that they are impartial; and, with that conviction on his mind, the Irish peasant is as perfectly tractable, as the native of any other country in the world.

An attachment to and a respect for females is another marked characteristic of the Irish peasant. The wife partakes of all her

* Sir John Davis, Attorney General of Ireland, who, in the reign of James the First, was employed by the King to establish the English laws throughout Ireland, and who made himself perfectly acquainted with the character of the inhabitants, admits that "there were no people under heaven, who loved equal and impartial justice better than the Irish."

husband's vicissitudes, and accompanies him on all his occasions:—they are almost inseparable. She watches over him in his dissipation: she shares his labor and his miseries, with constancy and with affection. At all the sports and meetings of the Irish peasantry, the women are always of the company: they have a great influence; and, in his smoky cottage, the Irish peasant, surrounded by his family, seems to forget all his privations. The natural cheerfulness of his disposition banishes reflexion; and he experiences a simple happiness, which even the highest ranks of society might justly envy.

The miscellaneous qualities of the Irish character are marked and various*:—peculiarly polite—passionately fond of noise and merriment—superstitious—bigoted—they are always in extremes; and, as Giraldus Cambrensis described them in the

* It is worth remarking, how little change has taken place in the Irish character during the last two hundred and fifty years. J. Good, an ecclesiastic, who resided at Limerick in the year 1566, gives the following character of the Irish of that day, which, in almost every material point, remains the true character of the nation at the present moment. “In general, this people are robust, and remarkably nimble — of bold and haughty spirit — sharp-witted, lively, warlike, prodigal of life — patient of want, heat, and cold — of amorous complexion — hospitable to strangers — constant in their attachments — implacable in their resentments — credulous, greedy of glory, impatient of reproach and injury. — They think it the highest wealth to live without work, and the greatest happiness to enjoy liberty.”

twelfth century, so they still continue — “ If an Irishman be a “ good man, there is no better : if he be a bad man, there is no “ worse.”

In his person, the Irish peasant is strong, active, hardy, and extremely swift. The finest men in Ireland are the descendents of the Spaniards, who, after so many centuries, are still distinguishable by their fine oval countenances, their large black eyes, their noble mien, and manly features : — the descendents of the Danes are red-haired and hard-featured, but remarkably hardy, though less active : — the offspring of the Scots are very similar, though in many respects inferior, to their kindred race in Scotland ; — and those descended from the English settlers are the least remarkable of any Irishmen for any singularity of person or of character.

Possessed of these qualities, and suffering under these humiliating depressions, the Irish peasant, in 1780, was found uncultivated, ignorant, and wretched, but gifted, capable, and generous ; and it was reserved for that celebrated period to introduce to the notice of Europe that calumniated people, and develop to general view those qualities, which, in other times, would probably have been either entirely overlooked, or certainly under-rated.

These were the intellectual qualities, which capricious nature had distributed, in varied and unequal proportions, among the inhabitants of this extraordinary island. Their fertile disposi-

tions, adapted to the cultivation of almost every passion, produced individual characters of the greatest variety, diversified by the gradations of rank, and influenced by the extent of their education.

The middle class of gentry, interspersed throughout the country parts of the kingdom, possessed as much of the peasant character as accorded with more liberal minds and superior society. With less necessity for exertion than the peasant, and an equal inclination for the indulgence of indolence, their habits were altogether devoid of industry, and adverse to reflexion:—the morning chase and evening conviviality composed the diary of their lives, cherished the thoughtlessness of their nature, and banished the cares and solitudes of foresight. They uniformly lived beyond their means, and aspired beyond their resources: pecuniary embarrassment only gave a new zest to the dissipation which created it; and the gentry of Ireland at this period had more troubles and fewer cares than any gentry in the universe.

These habits, however, while they contracted the distance between the lower and the superior order, had also the effect of promoting their mutual good-will and attachment to each other. The peasant looked up to and admired, in the country gentleman, those propensities which he himself possessed:—actuated by a native sympathy of disposition, he loved old customs: he liked to follow the track and example of his forefathers, and

adhered to the fortunes of some ancient family, with a zealous sincerity ; and, in every matter of party or of faction, he obeyed the orders of his landlord, and even anticipated his wishes, with cheerfulness and humility.

Thus the Irish country gentleman, without either the ties of blood or the weight of feudal authority, found himself surrounded by followers and adherents ever ready to adopt his cause, and risk their lives for his purposes, with as warm devotion as those of the Scottish laird or the highland chieftain ; and this disposition, cultivated by family pride on the one side, and confirmed by immemorial habit on the other, greatly promoted the formation, the progress, and the zeal, of those armed associations which soon afterward covered the face of the country, and for a moment placed the name of Ireland on the very highest pinnacle of affective patriotism.

It was the fashion of those days to cast upon the Irish gentry an imputation—which though they by no means generally deserved, yet it would be uncandid not to admit that there was some partial ground for the observation—that they showed a disposition to decide petty differences by the sword, and too fastidious a construction of what they termed the “ point of honor.” This practice certainly continued to prevail in many parts of Ireland, where time and general intercourse had not yet succeeded in extinguishing altogether the romantic but honorable spirit of

Milesian chivalry: and, when we reflect on the natural war-like disposition of the Irish people—that indigenous impetuosity and love of battle which so eminently distinguished their aboriginal character—it is not surprising that hasty and unnecessary encounters should occasionally occur among a people perpetually actuated by the pride of ancestry and the theories of honor. But, even in these contests, the Irish gentleman forgave his adversary with as much readiness as he fought him: he respected the courage which aimed at his own life; and the strongest friendships were sometimes formed, and frequently regenerated, on the field of battle. It is natural to suppose that this practice should have been noticed, and perhaps exaggerated, by the English people, whose long enjoyment of police and of industry had endowed them with less punctilious and much more discreet propensities.

The cowardly crime of suicide, however, which prevailed and prevails so extensively throughout England, was almost unknown among the Irish gentry. Circumstances, which would plunge an Englishman into a state of mortal despondency, would only rouse the energies of an Irishman to bound over his misfortunes*:—under every pressure, in every station, and in every

* The Irish people have been accused of frequently committing what are termed *blunders*, or perverted phraseology: but many sayings, which have

climate, a lightness of heart and openness of disposition distinguishes him from the inhabitants of every other country.

A circumstance, not unfrequently injurious to the concerns of Ireland, was that influence which the imposing condescensions of superior rank, and the flattering professions of power and of interest, occasionally acquired over the natural independence of the Irish gentry. This partial imbecillity of mind was but too well ascertained, and often too successfully practised upon, for the political purposes of artful governments; and, on that interesting occasion, when every weapon, which the ingenuity of man could invent, was used to impose the Union on a reluctant people, it will be seen that Ireland lost the active exertions of many a zealous friend, through the insidious blandishments of a noble visitor.

But this paralysing weakness was far from being universal: numerous instances will occur in the course of this memoir, where the public and individual spirit and integrity of the Irish gentry were tried to their full extent, and proved to be invincible: the reader will see exhibited frequent examples of patriotism, too precious to be forgotten, and which it would be ungrateful to the acquired that name, are in fact the aphorisms of sound sense, and strong-witted observation. The Irishman's remark, that "he would rather commit *suicide* on *any one* than *himself*," would puzzle the ingenuity of a moral casuist, and places the crime of self-murder in a very uncertain rank of homicide.

individual, and an injustice to the country, not to distinguish and commemorate.

On the whole of their characters, the Irish gentry, though far from being faultless, had many noble qualities:—generous, hospitable, friendly, brave—but careless, prodigal, and indiscreet—they possessed the materials of distinguished men with the propensities of obscure ones, and, by their openness and sincerity, too frequently became the dupes of artifice, and the victims of dissimulation.

Among the highest orders of the Irish people, the distinguishing features of national character had been long wearing away, and becoming less prominent and remarkable. The manners of the nobility, in almost every European country, verge to one common centre: by the similarity of their education and society, they acquire similar habits; and a constant intercourse with courts clothes their address and language, as it does their persons, in one peculiar garb—disguising the strong points, and concealing the native traits, of their original characters.

In Ireland, the nobility were then in number comparatively few: the policy, which the British minister soon afterward so liberally adopted, of diminishing the weight and resistance of the Commons by removing their leaders into the Lords, had not yet been extensively practised in Ireland.

The unprecedented expenses of the American war, which first familiarised the English people to empty their purses for the support of unnecessary and inglorious warfare (in which they have since become such extraordinary proficient), called every day for new resources; and the minister conceived and executed the artful project of increasing his financial means and parliamentary power by erecting a banking and commercial interest on the site and ruins of the landed representation. Accordingly the peerage was liberally recruited from among the commons; and the numbers and importance of the country gentlemen in the lower house proportionally diminished. Money-brokers gradually assumed their places—began to constitute a new order in the state, and to form, if not an integral part, at least a necessary appendage to every subsequent administration of Great Britain.

Experience has proved the mischiefs of that fatal policy to the whole of the empire. The great body of the country gentlemen of England—whose attachment to the principles of the constitution, and whose obstinate and jealous independence, no minister could have ventured to assail by direct corruption—has, by this courtly artifice, been effectually divided: too great a facility of raising public money gave too loose a rein to public prodigality: many of the most formidable guardians of the nation were removed from the field of contest; and now, by the operation

of this policy, a minister who cultivates the moneyed interest of London, can draw with ease the purse-strings of the whole nation — can speculate, and squander, and then with impunity defy the people, and neutralise the Parliament.

But this policy would have been useless in Ireland: — the purse of Dublin would not then have borne the expense of opening it: the Irish peerage therefore remained stationary; and the voice and spirit of the country gentlemen of Ireland had not been smothered in the profusion of their honors*.

* State of the Irish Peerage in the year 1780.	Irish Peers, created <i>subsequent</i> to 1780.	Irish Peers, created in 1800, on the Union.
Duke 1	..... 0	..... 0
Marquises..... 0	..... 9	..... 4
Earls.....44	.....23	..... 6
Viscounts .....36	.....20	..... 5
Barons .....25	.....52	.....22
<hr/> 106	<hr/> 104	<hr/> 37

Thus it appears, that, from the year 1780, the number of Irish peers was much more than *doubled*: and it also appears that no fewer than *thirty-seven* new creations (being *seven* more than the *whole* number of peers *now* allowed for Ireland) took place in the year of the union (1800); and, of those thirty-seven new peers, *thirty-two* had actually voted for the Union in Ireland — *eighteen* of them as *commoners*. The individual history of these thirty-two creations in 1800 will be found in the progress of this memoir.

Though the greater number of the Irish noblemen had been of remote creations—as a few had not been long enough removed from the mass of the community, to have acquired very high ideas of hereditary pride, or to have emblazoned the shield of very ancient or illustrious pedigrees—the services which called them to these honors, were not very remote or uncommonly splendid—yet many dignified and patriotic personages were then comprised within that body, and would have perpetuated their own and their country's honor, had not the transaction of 1790 proved the triumph of interest, and the mortality of character. But, while the country looks back with pain to the suicide of it's peerage*, and laments the apostasy of Shannon and of Ormond, it feels some consolation in reflecting that their public conduct found a splendid contrast in the illustrious consistency of Leinster and of Charlemont.

As a body, the Irish lords were not peculiarly prominent in the affairs of their country: but they were dignified. Their

* Some time after the Union had taken place, the author of this memoir felt a melancholy impulse to look into the late Irish House of Parliament. The noble vestibule was occupied as a printing-office: the magnificent dome of the Commons' House had become the habitation of pigeons; and, on turning toward the House of Lords, he saw the word "EXHIBITION" displayed on a board in large golden letters. Surprised at the appearance, he proceeded, and found that a show of ENGLISH RAMS had occupied the mansion of the *Irish peerage*!

debates (until the accession of Lord Clare) were calm and temperate; and, though, like the members of all other political assemblies, they were individually various in talent and in character, the appearance of the whole was grand; and their conduct, if not spirited, was firm and respectable.

The Irish clergy, both Protestants and Catholics, possessed at that period much greater influence among their flocks, than in later days. The seductive and vicious doctrines of Payne and Godwin, which assailed the very foundations of Christianity, and attempted to loose every bond of social compact and moral obligation, had not yet intoxicated the giddy multitude, who afterward became their proselytes. Men were then educated to improve their reason, not to bewilder their understanding by fantastic theories of governments without rank, and morality without religion: the sacred doctrines of the church were then regarded by all people with that temperate reverence, which partook neither of the fanaticism of ancient times, nor the impious scepticism of modern infidelity.

The Protestant church had great weight in the community: the hierarchy, participating in the dignity of an independent parliament, possessed the united influence of spiritual rank and legislative importance: all classes of the parochial clergy, though well affected to the state, still adhered to the interests of their country, and, assuming a deportment decorous and charac-

teristic, were at that time generally esteemed, and deservedly respected.

The provision of the inferior Protestant clergy was then (as at present) quite disproportioned to their duties and their profession. Many of that meritorious class of men—the officiating curates, whose precepts and example were to direct the morals and guide the conduct of the people—had become grey in poverty—and, laboring under the pressure of severe necessities, effectually preached up to their congregations the exercise of that charity, which would have been aptly and benevolently applied to their own persons.

The general conduct of these men had at all times remained un-exceptionable. From them the character of the Irish clergy was best to be collected:—the luxurious possessor of sinecure and plurality, enjoying ease and abundance without care or solicitude, must form a very inferior criterion of experienced merit, when compared to the distressed pastor, whose conduct remains exemplary, while his indigence and necessities might have tempted him into errors. The extremes of income among the Protestant clergy were too distant: their wealth and their poverty formed too strong a contrast.

The Catholic clergy had then an unlimited influence over the people of their own persuasion.—Though the cruel impolicy of the penal statutes had not been altogether set aside, they

remained dutiful and obedient to the sovereign power, cheerfully submissive to the existing laws, and friendly and affectionate to their Protestant fellow subjects.

Candidates for Catholic ordination (generally selected from the lower orders of the people) were sent to France for spiritual instruction, and returned to their own country, though vulgar, not illiterate:—still retaining many of the propensities of their peasant origin, they showed that their respect to superior rank, and an implicit submission to the constituted authorities, were rather increased than diminished by their foreign education.

The monarchy of France—despotic, splendid, and powerful—was at that time regarded with devotion by the French people, as a structure which neither time could destroy, nor tempests endanger. Its broad base covered every portion of the people: its stupendous height was surveyed with awe, and its colossal strength beheld with admiration. The ecclesiastical communities, fostered under its shelter, experienced the protection of despotic power, and, by their doctrines and their practice, endeavoured to increase its strength, and secure its permanence.

The Irish student, thus early imbibing those monastic principles, was taught at Saint Omer the advantages of undefined power in a king, and of passive obedience in a subject: he was there instructed to worship a throne, and to mingle his devotion

to heaven and to monarchy. The restoration of a Catholic king over Ireland had long ceased to be practicable: such projects therefore were hopeless, and relinquished; and the Irish Catholic clergyman, however he might naturally have wished for the regal supremacy of his own sect, had long since abandoned every view of an object altogether un-attainable.

The Irish student perceived also, during his residence in France, that Ireland was not the only nation where religious persecution and intolerance had eminently flourished:—the expulsion of the Hugonots (still more unjustifiable than the subjection of the Catholics) taught him that his own country had not been the only theatre of massacre and injustice; and the despotic acts of the French government gave him a daily lecture on the mildness and security of the British constitution.

The doctrines of democracy and republicanism—which soon afterward overwhelmed one tyranny, only to establish the omnipotence of another—were also totally repugnant to the austere doctrines of a monastic education, and directly adverse to the interests of the Roman Catholic clergy. Those levelling principles had yet made no impression on the Irish Catholics: the northern Presbyterian was the first who imbibed them, and silently promoted their propagation, till his grand auxiliary, the French revolution, enabled him openly to avow them. British supremacy

had then no overt enemies, save it's own ministers — nor any conspiracies against it's power, but the arbitrary determinations of it's own cabinet.

The Irish Catholic, thus returning from his noviciate, and educated with all the dispositions of a submissive subject, found his native country in a state of profound tranquillity. His views were contracted: his ambition extended no further than the affections of his flock, and the enjoyments of society. The closest intimacy subsisted between him and his parishioners: he mingled in all their pastimes, and frequently in their dissipation: but the most illiterate among them knew how to distinguish clearly between the occasional familiarities of personal intercourse, and a dutiful respect for his religious functions; and, even though their companion might have been condemned, their priest was always sure to be respected.

The Catholic and the Protestant at the same time lived in habits of great unanimity: they harboured no animosities or indisposition toward each other: the one governed without opposition — the other submitted without resistance; and the Catholic clergy had every inclination to retain their flock within proper limits, and found no difficulty in effecting that object.

The severity, with which the agents of the Protestant clergy in some parishes collected their tithes — and the exactions and

oppressions, which the middle-man* exercised over the occupant of the land—occasionally excited partial disturbances: but, in these, there was nothing of a revolutionary nature: they were only the nocturnal riots of some oppressed and mismanaged districts, which the civil power in general found no difficulty in suppressing.

* The term *middle-men* is applied, in Ireland, to the numerous intermediate tenants intervening between the head landlord and the occupier of the land. This system of underletting has long been one of the most deplorable grievances of Ireland. The head landlord lets a large tract of ground to his immediate tenant at a very moderate rent: this immediate tenant divides and re-lets it in divisions at a considerable profit: in like manner his tenants subdivide and re-let; and thus, after a number of subdivisions and re-lettings (each with their respective profits), the land at length comes down to the actual *occupier* in very small portions, at an *enormous* rent—sometimes *eight* pounds, or perhaps more, per acre, for that which the immediate tenant rents at *one*.

This practice, however, is somewhat declining; and the *resident gentlemen* of Ireland are beginning to see it's mischiefs, and to act upon a principle much more advantageous to themselves, as well as to the peasantry. While it continued, it certainly gave rise to occasional disturbances in Ireland, which have been dignified, in the British Parliament, by the title of *insurrections*: but these were in fact very partial outrages, occasioned solely by the oppression of *tithe-proctors* and *middle-men*, but unconnected with any extensive system or admixture of *politics* whatsoever.

The population of Ireland, distributed into those classes—endowed with those qualities—and borne down by an accumulation of impolitic and ungenerous restraints—at length awakened as it were from a deep trance.—The pulse of that nation, torpid through habitual oppression, began to throb;—her blood, stimulated by the stings of injustice, which she had so long and so patiently endured, circulated with a new rapidity;—her heart, re-animated, sent motion and energy through her whole frame, and from a cold and almost lifeless corse, Ireland was seen majestically arising from the tomb of obscurity, and paying the first tribute of her devotion at the shrine of liberty.

Roused to a sense of her miserable situation, she cast her eyes around on the independent States of Europe, and compared their strength, their capacity, and their resources, with her own. Encouraged by the view of her comparative superiority, she soon perceived that she had strength, and means, and opportunity to redress herself from the wrongs and degradations she was suffering;—and that so long as she tolerated the authority of the British Legislature over her concerns, so long her commerce, her constitution, and her liberties must lie prostrate at the foot of every British Minister—through the assumption and exercise of whose power, a system of government had been adopted, and was obviously in full and decisive progress, by which Great Britain was rapidly proceeding to colonize rather than associate with Ireland.

The political situations of both nations at that critical period, afforded a more than common scope for political contemplation ;—even the coldest politicians of that day were led involuntarily to reflect on the nature of the federative compact between the two countries, and could not avoid perceiving the total absence of that reciprocal good faith and confidence which alone could ensure the integrity of the empire, or the permanence of the connection.—In theory the two nations were linked together by the strongest ties of mutual interest and mutual security ;—but in practice those interests were separated by the meanest speculations of commercial avarice ;—and that conjunction of strength, on which the security of the empire must at all times so especially depend, was corruptly compromised, to conciliate the jealousy of British traders ; as if England had totally forgotten that her integrity as an empire owed a great proportion of it's stability to the co-operation of the Irish people ;—and that if one hundred thousand Irish subjects, who fought her battles in her armies and in her navy, became disaffected, or even neutralized, by insults or by injuries, to their country, the English nation would too late discover the fatal impolicy of her illiberal system.*

* There exists no infallible data, by which the number of Irish soldiers and sailors, at that time in the British service, can be accurately ascertained ;—but the number at present is estimated at considerably more than *one hundred thousand*.

The fundamental principles upon which the connection between the two nations was founded, soon became a subject of general inquiry and universal discussion amongst every rank and class of society; and it required but little difficulty to convey to the quick conception of a naturally acute and intelligent people, a comprehensive view of their rights and of their deprivations;—nor was Ireland, at that period, destitute of able and active partisans, anxious and competent to instruct her people, in language best adapted to impress upon the poignancy of their national feelings, and enlarge the scope of their political understandings.

They were told by those instructors, that Ireland was connected with Great Britain, upon the basis of a complete equality of rights, and a full participation of constitution;—that she possessed a resident Parliament of her own—competent, in all points, to legislate on her own concerns, and in no point connected with or subordinate to that of Great Britain.

That their King was bound to govern Ireland, not through his crown of England, but through his crown of Ireland—conferred

This circumstance should impress upon the English nation the vital importance of Ireland to the *safety* of Great Britain, and the political necessity of cultivating the affections and advancing the resources of a people who contribute so largely to the basis of imperial protection. More than one-third of that body, whose intrepidity has established the invincible superiority of the British navy, under the denomination of *British tars*, are, in fact, composed of *Irish-born* subjects—a deduction of whose numbers and bravery would be a fatal diminution of British security.

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upon him by the Irish nation, and worn by him, in conjunction with that of Great Britain, as the chief magistrate of both,—but to govern each country severally by their respective laws and their distinct legislatures, and not the one through the other;—and though the Irish crown was, by the constitution of that country, placed for ever on the head of the same legitimate monarch who should wear that of England,—yet the Irish people were not bound to obey any laws but those enacted by their own Legislature—to transfer the sceptre of their realm to any usurped authority—or submit to the hostile or corrupt policy of any Minister who might occasionally occupy the seat of power in England, or be employed in Ireland to violate it's constitution;—that their oath of allegiance was taken to the King of Ireland, and not to the Parliament of Great Britain;—and that their constitution, their commerce, and their general prosperity, should be objects of their King's paternal care and solicitude, equally with that of his other kingdom;—that the strict observance of this principle was indispensable to their existence as an independent nation—and that every violation of it was a direct deviation from the duty of the Irish Crown, and so far a virtual dereliction of the compact of connection between the two countries;—and that the King's ministers of either country advising unconstitutional measures, to violate or suppress the constitutional independence of Ireland, must at all times be considered as traitors to the Irish Crown, and enemies to the British Empire.

The people were further and truly informed, that the British Ministers had advised, and were continuing to advise, their King to adopt, or at least to countenance, measures hostile to the just rights and independence of their nation, and to effect those measures by means of unqualified corruption ;—that the commerce of Ireland was in every instance sacrificed or postponed to that of Great Britain, lest it might chance to interfere with the speculations or the gain of private monopolists ;—that in furtherance of this unjustifiable system, so long adopted and acted upon, her manufactures,* and native commodities, were debarred from

* The narrow policy of the British Legislature—it's ill-founded jealousies—and determined hostility to the trade and commerce of Ireland, from an early period, are well illustrated by the Address of the Lords and Commons of England to King William the Third, demanding of him to put down, by an *unconstitutional* interference, the *staple* manufacture of Ireland, by which it had long supported a great proportion of it's poor inhabitants, and worked up it's principal raw material.—The unanimous address of the English Lords, 5th June, 1698, to his Majesty, contains these memorable expressions :—
 “ The growing manufacture of cloth in Ireland, both by the cheapness of all sorts of
 “ necessities of life, and goodness of materials for making all manner of cloth, doth invite
 “ your subjects of England, with their families and servants, to leave their habitations to
 “ settle there, to the increase of the woollen manufacture in Ireland ; which makes your
 “ loyal subjects in this kingdom very apprehensive that the further growth of it may greatly
 “ prejudice the said manufacture here ;—we therefore beseech your Majesty, that you
 “ will, in the most public and *effectual* way that may be, declare to all your subjects of
 “ Ireland, that the growth and increase of the woollen manufacture hath long, and will

being exported, by illegal embargoes ;—her manufacturers were restrained from the exercise of their trades, and thereby from the

“ EVER be *looked upon with jealousy* by all your subjects of *THIS kingdom* ; and if not
“ timely remedied, may occasion very strict laws, totally to prohibit and *suppress* the
“ same.”

King William, in his answer, says, “ His Majesty will take care to do what their Lordships have desired.”—And as if the British Lords were desirous to give more than common publicity to their own injustice, and aggravate the well-founded irritation of Ireland, they directed their Chancellor “ to have the address, and the King’s most *gracious* answer, printed, and circulated throughout *both* kingdoms.”

The English Commons were not behind-hand with the Lords in the same principle of commercial intolerance.—In their address to the King, at the same period, they declare, that “ the wealth and peace of England do in a great measure depend on preserving the
“ woollen manufacture, as much as possible, *entire* to that realm ;—that they think it
“ becomes them, like their *ANCESTORS*, to be *jealous of the establishment*, and in-
“ crease thereof elsewhere, and to use their utmost endeavours to *prevent it* ; and there-
“ fore they cannot without trouble observe, that Ireland, dependant on and protected by
“ England, in the enjoyment of ALL they have, should of late apply itself to the woollen
“ manufacture, to the great prejudice of the trade of *England*. The consequence whercof
“ will necessitate your Parliament of *England* to *interpose*, to prevent the mischief that
“ threatens us ;—and we do most humbly implore your Majesty’s *protection* and favour
“ in this matter, and that you will make it your royal *care*, and enjoin *all those you em-
“ ploy in Ireland* to make it their *care*, and use their utmost diligence to *discourage the
“ woollen manufactures there*.”

The King’s answer can only be excused by a consideration of the *mode* by which he came to the English throne, and the dependance he then had upon the Parliament which placed him there. A great or a good King could never have voluntarily sacrificed the

means of earning subsistence;—that even the imports absolutely necessary to complete her own manufactures, for her own consumption, must (through the same rigorous policy) pass through England, before they were permitted to reach the markets of Ireland—with delay, expense, and adulteration;—that she was denied the advantages of a Colonial commerce,—and by the Navigation Act of England, debarred even from the common rights of British subjects.

That illegal sanction was given to illegal measures by the officers of the Government;—and lest the Irish Courts of Law

prosperity and commerce of one portion of his subjects to the mean and avaricious jealousy of another;—William, however, in the most unqualified manner, acceded to the desire of the British Parliament;—his answer admitted of no misconstruction, and spoke no reluctance:—"I shall (says the King in his reply) do all *that in me lies to discourage the woollen trade of Ireland.*"—King William kept his word; and by the unconstitutional interference of her Government, he extinguished the staple manufacture of Ireland, and turned fifty thousand industrious manufacturers into fifty thousand itinerant beggars.

This transaction is stated, to illustrate the unwarrantable system which was then established, and which has been more or less acted upon, as opportunity occurred, or circumstances admitted, from the time of the revolution down to the last session of the Imperial Parliament; even so far, that not only the spirit, but the letter even of the act of Union, has, upon the same principle, been in many instances encroached upon, if not absolutely broken through. The ingenuity practised, for the purpose of giving to the British distillers the superiority which they had lost by the only article of the Union beneficial to Ireland, must strike every person who considers that subject, as a virtual violation even of the last deceptious compact between the two nations.

should condemn the illegality of such proceedings, even public justice had been made the sacrifice of British policy—and the Judges of Ireland remained dependant on the British Ministers, subject in a moment to be displaced from their benches, should they refuse to sanction the operation of British statutes or ministerial dictation in Ireland :—and that, to consummate that system of arbitrary jurisprudence, the appeal from the Courts of Justice was taken from the Irish Peers, and unconstitutionally transferred to the decisions of an English tribunal.

They were further taught that the military establishment in Ireland was supported under a perpetual mutiny bill, enacted by the British Parliament,* establishing a standing army, uncontrollable by the Irish Legislature—a measure inconsistent with the true principles of British liberty, and the constitution of a free Government ;—and that the whole of those injurious measures

* The Irish Parliament had, in a paroxysm of loyalty, after the restoration, granted to Charles the Second an hereditary revenue, chargeable upon Ireland, and adequate to it's ordinary establishment. This Prince (whose ingratitude was fully proved, by his confirmation of the grants of Irish territory made by his father's murderer to the English soldiers) taking advantage of this *permanent* subsidy, discontinued the holding of Parliament in Ireland for many years—and kept a standing army on foot in that kingdom, under the authority of a *perpetual* mutiny bill, enacted in *England*.—This was the foundation of a serious grievance, denounced by the Irish Volunteers at Dungannon, in 1782—and added a proof of the unprincipled disposition of the Stuart family ; by which one monarch lost his head—a second his character—and a third his dynasty.

were supported on the power assumed by the British Privy Council to suppress or alter the legislative acts of Ireland, in their progress between the Parliament and the King, and to regulate by their authority the concerns of a nation which was constitutionally the equal, not the dependant of Great Britain.

It was also observed, that this assumption of authority to legislate for Ireland, whatever colouring it might have received by the dissimulation or ingenuity of it's supporters, had, in fact, for it's real object the restraint of her commerce and the suppression of her manufactures—so far as they might interfere with the interests of England; because the management of the mere local concerns of Ireland by her own Parliament, was altogether immaterial to Great Britain, unless where a commercial rivalry might be the probable consequence of successful industry and legislative encouragement.

From this reasoning, it was obvious that the redress of these grievances could not depend solely upon any exertions of the Irish Legislature. The Peers—from the causes herein before assigned—were influenced at that time by a very small portion of public feeling;—the measures of the Commons might be suppressed, by an act of the Privy Council; and it became manifest, that an universal and determined co-operation of the whole people with their representatives, to rescue their representation, by vigorous measures, could alone operate with sufficient effect

upon the policy and fears of England ;—and that a general appeal to the people would be justified by the soundest axioms of civil Government,—as long experience had fully ascertained, that nothing was to be gained by the forbearance of the one nation, or to be expected from the voluntary justice of the other.

The Irish people being thus apprized of the sources of their grievances, the subject quickly engrossed their whole thoughts, and became familiar to their understandings ; a new and broad field of reflection was opened to the middle orders,—political discussions necessarily followed, from day to day ;—at every public and private meeting, and in every district, these discussions turned on the principles of liberty,—and as the subject expanded, their ideas became enlarged ;—those who could read, liberally instructed the illiterate, as to the rudiments of their history and the rights of their constitution,—and, by familiar deductions, the misery of the peasant was without difficulty brought home to the corruption of the Ministers.—All ranks of the community began to mingle and converse at their public meetings,—the influence of that general communication diffused itself rapidly amongst every class of society,—and the people, after having perfectly ascertained the hardships of their situation, naturally proceeded to discuss the most decisive means of redressing their grievances.

The circumstances of public affairs in America, and on the continent of Europe, but more especially in England herself, were

at that moment peculiarly propitious to the political emancipation of Ireland;—a dark cloud appeared collecting over the head of Great Britain—the rays of her setting sun could scarcely penetrate the obscurity of the gloom which surrounded her,—and though she faced the impending hurricane with magnanimity and perseverance, she experienced a most anxious solicitude at the awful crisis which was rapidly approaching her.

Her situation was terrific.—The States of America, colonised by her industry, and peopled by her convicts—tearing themselves away from the mother country—claiming protection from the natural enemy to both,—and appealing to the whole world against the tyranny which at once had caused and justified her disobedience,—British armies wandering through boundless deserts, and associating with the savage tribes for savage purposes, dwindling by their victories, and diminishing by their conquests,—surrendering their swords to those whom they had recently vanquished—and lowering the flag of England, with all the courtesies of continental warfare, to those very men whom the preceding moment they had proclaimed as traitors to their King and to their country: *—The public treasury exhausted by an unpo-

* The very different line of conduct adopted by England towards America and Ireland, when respectively in a state of insurrection, is very remarkable. The Americans, (a mere colony) united with French troops, stood in open rebellion, for the avowed purpose of

pular contest—the mother country drained of her troops, for the devastation of her colonies—and depending upon a gracious

final separation from the mother country, and were proclaimed *traitors* and *rebels* by the King and the Parliament;—yet they uniformly experienced from the British military commanders the most decorous and respectful treatment.—Their generals were addressed by their appropriate official titles—their military rank was recognized by the British army—their officers, when taken, were admitted on their parole of honor—and their prisoners were treated with humanity and attention; and, on the whole, they received from English Generals all the honors and courtesies of a fair enemy engaged in a legitimate warfare.

The Irish experienced a very different conduct in 1798,—when immediate execution was generally the gentlest punishment inflicted upon the insurgents of every rank, office, and description;—and the laws of retaliation giving rise to a competition of barbarities, deluged the whole country in *cold* blood—extinguished its spirit—divided its people—and destroyed its reputation.

To persons who are unacquainted with the true history of those transactions, and the advantages which the project of the British Minister derived from the extent of those cruelties—the encouragement which they received at one period, and the tardy, ambiguous conduct of Lord Cornwallis at another, will appear altogether inconsistent and unaccountable. But the difficulty will be solved, when it becomes evident, from historic facts, (still within the reach of full and unequivocal proof) that, without that general horror,—depression,—and dismay, which the extent and continuance of those mutual barbarities had excited throughout all ranks and classes of people, the measure of a Legislative Union never durst have been proposed to Ireland,—and that this terrific sensation was critically made use of, as the strongest instrument, to impose that measure on a people, sunk under the lassitude of civil war, and while in search of peace, forgetful of liberty.

Providence for internal protection ;—an almost general coalition of the great powers of Europe to humble her pride, if not to effect her destruction ;—the combined fleets of France and Spain, with unprecedented impunity, riding triumphant in the British channel, and capturing British ships of war, even in the view and under the eye of the garrison of Portsmouth ;—in short, every circumstance which tended to enfeeble or degrade Great Britain, had at that moment combined to render resistance to the just claims of the Irish nation doubly impolitic, if not absolutely impossible. 2

However, the wise and deliberate measures which Ireland, on this occasion, adopted, proved not only her unshaken fidelity, but her moderation and her unaffected attachment to Great Britain.—She saw the perilous situation of her sister country ; and though she determined to profit by the crisis, in justly reclaiming her commerce, and her constitution, she also determined to stand or fall with the British Empire, and to share the fate of England in the tremendous confederacies which were formed and were forming against her.

The Irish people, however, felt that they had a double duty to perform—to themselves—and to their posterity :—England herself had given them a precedent to follow ;—she had proved, by the experience of centuries, that when she had an object to achieve in Ireland, she had never been restrained by the punctilious dictates of national honor,—and had never failed to take advantage of the

feebleness of Ireland to impose the grievous weight of her arbitrary restrictions,—she had, at all periods, systematically encouraged the internal dissensions of that people, the better to humble them for the yoke which she had always ready to place upon their country;—Ireland, therefore, felt that she would be justified by British precedent to take advantage of this important crisis—and that even the practical principles of the British constitution had declared and justified the right of popular resistance;—England had, upon the same principle of resistance to arbitrary power, attempted to justify the murder of one King, and the deposition of another,—whilst Ireland, preferring her allegiance to her policy, remained faithful to both, and was rewarded for her loyalty by massacre and confiscation.

However, a hasty or impetuous resistance of the Irish people, even to the most arbitrary acts of their King or of their Government, was by no means a principle congenial to their political character; whilst it was obvious to the whole world, that England had adopted those violent and outrageous proceedings against her own monarchs, upon principles and pretences far less constitutional and more inconsistent with her liberties than the measures and conduct which had been wantonly and systematically practised by British ministers against Irish freedom. With this useful and awful lesson before her eyes, Ireland wisely considered that she would best raise and establish her

national character, and effect her just objects, by a gradual re-assumption of her rights, and a temperate and fair demand of constitutional liberty;—that her moderation would form an edifying contrast to the violence and intemperance of England, whenever her liberties were invaded,—and that the advantage which the embarrassed state of Great Britain had now thrown into the hands of Ireland, would be most honorably exercised by a calm and loyal, but resolute and effectual proceeding:—she perceived, however, that the moment most favourable to her objects had arrived; which, if suffered to pass by, without effort, might never recur;—and it therefore only remained to Ireland to ascertain the means most moderate but most likely to call Great Britain to a sense of reason and of justice, and to secure to herself the attainment of her rights, without the danger of hostile convulsion, or the horrors of civil conflict.

The example of America, though by no means considered as a general precedent to be adopted by Ireland, yet in many points bore so strongly on her immediate situation, that it was impossible to forego the advantages which might be derived from a view of the incipient measures of the American people.

England, notwithstanding she had in some instances suspended, and in others prohibited, the exportation of Irish manufactures, inundated the Irish markets with every species of her own;—and with a view effectually to destroy all power of competition in Ire-

land, the great capitalists of England determined, even at any loss, to undersell the Irish in their own markets,—a loss, however, which they thought would be eventually and amply repaid by the monopoly which must necessarily succeed the utter destruction of the Irish manufacture.

This system it was impossible for the Irish manufacturer to resist or counteract ;—his capital was too small to bear the losses of competition ; resistance would have been vain ;—he had therefore no alternative, but to change his trade—or submit, and famish.

It depended, therefore, on the exertions of the people at large to resist this vicious and destructive project ;—and they lost no time in adopting the only measures which could effectually destroy the British combination.—With this view, they promptly and resolutely determined to adopt a non-importation and non-consumption agreement throughout the whole kingdom ; and by excluding not only the importation, but the consumption of any British manufacture in Ireland, visited back upon the English combinators the ruin of their own treachery. No sooner was this measure publicly proposed, than it was universally adopted ;—it flew quicker than the wind throughout the whole nation :—the manufacturing bodies—the corporate towns—the small retailers—the general merchants—at once universally adopted this wise and vigorous determination—and the great body of the people, by

general resolutions, and universal acclamations, avowed their firm determination to support the measure, and to persist in the rejection of British manufactures, till they should acquire a restoration of their political rights, and a free exercise of their commerce and their industry.

Mean-while, the armed associations hourly gained strength in numbers ;—they began to acquire the appendages and establishments of a regular army—discipline and confidence ; and gradually consolidated themselves into regiments and brigades ; some procured cannon and field equipages, and formed companies of artillery ;* the completion of one corps stimulated the formation of another, and at length almost every independent Protestant of Ireland was enrolled as a patriot soldier ; and the whole body of the Catholics declared themselves the decided auxiliaries of their armed countrymen.

This extraordinary armament—the recollection of which will for ever excite in Ireland a devotion to the cause of liberty, which neither time can efface nor misfortunes extinguish — actuated solely by the pure spirit of incorruptible patriotism, and signalized by a conduct more temperate and more judicious, than

* Belfast was the first town that furnished a train of artillery to the Volunteers, which they retained till the general disarming in 1798.—The celebrated Napper Tandy commanded the Dublin train ; but the principles of *democracy*, to which he fell a victim, ~~was~~ ^{was} at that time unknown in Europe.

had ever controlled the acts and objects of any military body in the history of the world.

The modern military corps, which have been skilfully, and perhaps wisely, embodied, to preclude any recurrence to the measure of volunteering, possess no analogy to these celebrated associations, save that spirit of loyalty which pervaded both; but with this clear, exemplified distinction, that the loyalty of the volunteers was to their King and to their country—the loyalty of the yeomen, to their King and to the Ministers; but which distinction, the different circumstances of the times, and the different nature of the establishments, may easily account for.

Self-formed, and self-governed, they accepted no commissions whatever from the Crown, and acknowledged no connection whatever with the Government;—the private men appointed their own officers, and occasionally cashiered them for misconduct or incapacity;—they accepted no pay whatever,—the more wealthy soldier cheerfully shared his funds with his poorer comrade—and the officers contributed their proportions to the general stock-purse.

Yet notwithstanding this perverted state of all military establishments, their subordination was complete;—the soldier obeyed, from the instinctive impulse of duty to his country—the officer commanded, upon the same principle—and very few instances

occurred, where either were found to deviate from the straightest line of military rectitude. The rules of discipline were adopted by general assent—and that passive obedience which, in regular armies, is enforced by punishment, amongst the Volunteers of Ireland was effected by honor.

They assumed various uniforms;—green, white, scarlet, or blue, were the prevailing colours.* Their line, therefore, appeared variegated, and peculiarly striking. Their arms were at first provided by themselves; but the extraordinary increase of their numbers rendered them at length unable to procure a sufficient

* The Lawyers' regiment of volunteers adopted exactly the uniform of the King's guards—their motto, "*Pro aris et focis.*" The Kilkenny regiment, (the late Earl of Ormond's) and the regiments of *Irish Brigades*, &c. wore green,—the motto of the latter, "*Fox populi suprema lex est.*"—The artillery corps wore blue,—and several light cavalry troops, white and green;—but the prevailing colours seemed to be scarlet and black. The cavalry used brass helmets—the infantry in general laced hats, and they had not altogether as much the appearance of a *regular* soldiery as the Dublin corps of yeomanry; though better dressed, and to the full as well disciplined—their arms were not as uniform as those of the yeomanry;—many good marksmen preferred their own fowling pieces, with long bayonets, to the common musket.—During the continuance of the Volunteer corps, no other *police* whatever was necessary throughout the whole nation—no public delinquent could possibly escape apprehension—and the most perfect peace and tranquility prevailed throughout every county and district in Ireland;—the Volunteers exerted themselves in every department, as the preservers of public peace, and with an effect never known at any former or later period in that country.

supply by purchase, and the importation was restrained :—they had then but one course—they confidently required arms from the Government, to assist in protecting themselves from the threatened invasion ;—the Government, whatever reluctance they might have felt to arm men who acknowledged no supremacy, yet did not think it prudent to refuse their demand ; and with an averted eye handed out to the Volunteers fifteen thousand muskets from the Castle of Dublin.

Being completely armed, the acquirement of persons capable of instructing so large a body in military tactics, appeared a matter of the greatest difficulty ;—but the same events which had first inspired the Irish with a determination to arm, furnished them with the means not only of acquiring discipline, but of increasing their ardor.

The disasters of the American war had restored to the bosom of Ireland many brave men, whose health had sunk under the consequences of wounds and sufferings, and who having witnessed the successful struggles of America for liberty, had returned to Ireland at that moment when she was critically preparing to assert her own. The association of these experienced veterans was sedulously courted by the Irish Volunteers ;—their orders were obeyed with confidence and alacrity,—and amongst the country corps the effect of their instructions became suddenly conspicuous,—and, under their experience, discipline advanced with a rapid progress.

The intercourse and conversation of those persons also had a powerful effect, by transfusing into their pupils that military mind which a veteran soldier can never relinquish. In their convivial hours, the Serjeant, surrounded by his company, expatiating on the events of actual service, and introducing episodes of individual bravery, perhaps of his own undauntedness and sagacity, gradually banished every other topic from their conversation at those meetings ;—the successful perseverance of America had impressed even the soldier himself who had fought against her, with an involuntary respect for the principles of his enemies ;—a constant intercourse with his Irish associates soon excited in him congenial feelings ;—and he began to listen with pleasure to their interesting question—“ Why should not his own brave countrymen possess as much constitutional liberty as those foreign colonists who had conquered him ? ”

It is difficult to conceive the fascination which seized upon the heretofore contracted intellect of the military farmer, by a repetition of these novel and warlike subjects ;—the martial propensity of his innate character had already rendered him peculiarly susceptible of these animating impressions, and he now almost imperceptibly imbibed a military mind, and acquired a soldier's feeling. In a word, the whole nation became enamoured of arms ; and those who were not permitted to bear them, considered themselves as honored by being employed to carry the food and ammunition of the soldier.

The chief commanders of these armed bodies were men of the highest and most distinguished characters, and each corps was in general headed by persons of the first respectability in their respective districts, selected generally for their popularity and independence;—but all these corps were, for a considerable time, totally distinct and unconnected; nor was it until they had formed into a consolidated column, under the command of the amiable and the illustrious Charlemont, that they acquired the irresistible impulse of a co-operating power. The wise and mild, but determined patriotism of that respected nobleman, gave a new tint of character to the whole army which he commanded, and chased away the tongue of slander from their objects and their conduct.

Amongst the crowd of those who were conspicuous as leaders of this national army, will be discovered men, whose attachment to Ireland continued equally undeviating and unabated, through all the vicissitudes of it's prosperity and it's misfortunes. But we shall also have, in the progress of these events, to deplore the lamentable fallibility of public confidence, and to trace, as historic facts, and through recorded documents, the patriot soldier of 1782 passing through all the subsequent gradations of slave and of renegado—and with the same tongue pronouncing the same word “yea” to the independence and to the annexation of his country.

Posterity will thus be enabled to compare and appreciate the true characteristic merit of those men who moved in the most

conspicuous sphere of Irish regeneration—and by many glaring examples of the most unlooked-for and unprincipled inconsistency, learn this true and awful lesson of human imperfection, that “public virtue receives it’s consummating stamp only when “the hand of Providence shall have finally extinguished the “powers of temptation.”

Amongst those who appeared as leaders of these armed associations, were many members of both Houses of the Irish Parliament,—and the prevailing sentiment of these times will receive a strong illustration from this circumstance—that all Irishmen of that day, whatever their real principle might be, at least affected to possess the same ardent and unextinguishable love for Irish independence—yet the names of Charlemont and of Leinster,—of Arran and of Burgh—of Stuart—of Grattan—of Ponsonby—of Flood—and of Brownlow—will appear signed to the same patriotic declarations—enrolled in the same associations, and embarked in the same cause, with Belvidere and Altamont, with Shannon, with Conolly, Nevil, and Fitzgibbon, &c. &c. whose public conduct, in 1780 and in 1800, will form respectively the most perfect precedents for distinguished patriotism and consummate apostacy.

In the number of those who, at this moment, were launched, for the first time, into public observation, there appeared a person, who, without possessing the highest reputation for public talent,

or the most undeviating line of public principle, by the honest and spirited termination of his political life, has been justly raised upon the elevated pedestal of national gratitude ; a person, whose early appointment to the first financial department of Ireland, and whose official conduct, from that day to the catastrophe of Irish Parliaments, will necessarily be the subject of frequent and important observations, and authorizes an introduction of his name and character, at an earlier stage of this history, than would otherwise be consistent with the regular detail of a progressive narrative.

Sir John Parnel, the commandant of a Volunteer association,* was the son of a crafty and prudent minor politician, (Sir John Parnel, of Rathlegue, in the Queen's county) and was educated with a view to a diplomatic situation ;—from that species of education he derived all the advantages which a plain, honest, and sensible man could be expected to acquire ;—but on his return from the Continent, was found by his father too deficient in the necessary attainments of plausible evasion and crafty duplicity, to qualify him for the high departments of foreign diplomacy ;—his talents, therefore, became destined for home application,—and by the intrigues of his father, and rather a forced exertion of his own abilities, he was soon noticed in the

* The Maryborough Volunteers.

Irish Parliament as a person of more than ordinary capacity,—and after a veering course of local politics, he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, (an office, the duties of which had been formerly executed by the Attorney General).—In that situation he continued, till the project of a Union called forth the public virtues of every man who possessed any, and too late opened the eyes of the nation to it's steady friends, and to it's temporizing enemies.

Sir John Parnel had an eminent capacity for public business, but a lamentable deficiency of system in it's arrangement.—His strong mind and cultivated understanding lost much of their effect by the flurry of his manner, which frequently confused and always impeded the perspicuity of his language.

His intellect was clear—his memory retentive—and his conception just ;—he possessed esteem, without an effort to obtain it, and preserved his friends, without exercising his patronage ;—he supported the Ministry, without offending the Opposition,—and all parties united in calling him an honorable man.

Plain—frank—cheerful—and convivial—he generally preferred society to trouble, and seemed to have rid himself of a heavy weight, when he had executed an official duty.—As a financier, he was not perfect,—as a statesman, he was not deep,—as a courtier, he was not polished,—but as an officer, he was not corrupt ;—and though many years in possession of high office, and extensive patronage, he showed a disinterestedness almost

unparalleled; and the name of a relative, or of a dependant, of his own, scarcely in a single instance increased the place or the pension lists of Ireland.

Though his education and habits were ministerial, his mind was intrinsically patriotic, and a sentiment of independent spirit not unfrequently burst out from under the pressure of that official restriction which the duties of his station had necessarily imposed upon him; but his appointment as a Minister never induced him to forget his birth as an Irishman; and his attachment to the Sovereign, never diminished his philanthropy to the subject.

After an honest, faithful, and zealous service of his King, for seventeen years—as Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer—he was called upon by the Minister to sacrifice his principles, and betray his country—to efface the impressions of his youth—and tarnish the honor of his maturity—to violate his faith—and falsify his conviction;—but the fetters of office could not restrain the spirit of it's captive—he lost his station, but he retained his integrity, and was compensated for the consequences of an undeserved dismissal, by the approbation of his conscience and the affection of his country.

The Volunteer corps which he commanded, early and zealously adopted the cause of Irish independence*—a cause

* The Maryborough infantry, commanded by Sir John Parnel, sent two delegates to the National Convention of Dublin, and entered into the following spirited resolution of accedance to the general confederacy:—

he strenuously adhered to, to the last moment of his existence—and in that noble firmness with which he resisted a legislative Union, and disobeyed the mandates of a crafty and vindictive Viceroy—he has left to the present age a brilliant and a rare example of a Minister, honest enough to prefer his character to his office—and proud enough to postpone his interest to his honor.

The external figure of Sir John Parnell seemed an archetype of his character;—his countenance, comely and benign, was less marked than animated;—his full, penetrating, but unsteady eye, conveyed the expression of irregular wisdom and of undisciplined ability;—his person (far above the middle size) appeared at the same moment active and 'unwieldy, —and indicated a singular combination of awkwardness and dignity—indolence and vigor—a sloven and a gentleman.

The Volunteer system now becoming universal in Ireland, effected an important and visible change in the minds and manners of the middle and lower orders of the people;—by the occurrence of new events, and the promulgation of novel prin-

“ Resolved, That the resolutions entered into by the Ulster Associations, at Dungan-
“ non, are truly spirited and patriotic—and *we are determined to support them*—and
“ think that a general meeting of *all* the Queen's County corps is at this time much
“ wanting, in order to enter into such *other* resolutions as the *exigency of the time may*
“ *require.*”

ciples, their natural character became affected in all it's bearings, and acquired, or rather disclosed, new points, which at that period tended to promote their prosperity, but eventually formed the grand pretence for the extinguishment of their independence.

The familiar association of all ranks, which the nature of their new military connection necessarily occasioned, every day lessened that wide distinction, which had theretofore separated the higher and lower orders of society;—the landlord and the tenant—the nobleman and the artisan—the general and the soldier—now, for the first time, sat down at the same board—shared the same fare—and enjoyed the same conviviality;—the lower order learned their own weight in the community—the higher were taught their dependance upon the people—and those whose illiterate minds had never before conceived or thought on the nature of political constitutions, or the fundamental principles of civil government, now learned, from the intercourse and conversation of their superiors, the rudiments of that complicated but noble science; the misconception and the abuse of which, has since become the severest scourge that ever afflicted the States of Europe.

A visible alteration was also soon observable in the general appearance of the people;—the squalid garb and careless dress of the Irish farmer was now exchanged for the minute cleanliness and regularity of the soldier;—a striking revolution took place not

only in the minds, but also in the external appearance, of the Irish ;—their intellect acquired strength by exercise and information—their address was improved by intercourse and discipline—and their general appearance by dress and regularity ;—and had not the same causes, which led to the concessions of 1782, induced the British Government to recal that constitution which had been wrested from it's feebleness, these unparalleled associations would have conferred advantages on the country, beyond all measures which human wisdom could have suggested, for it's improvement.

CHAP. IV.

Unexpected Events in the Irish House of Commons.—Mr. Grattan's Amendment to the Address.—His Character.—Mr. Hussey Burgh (the Prime Sergeant) secedes from Government, and substitutes an Amendment for Mr. Grattan's.—Opposed by Sir Henry Cavendish.—Sketch of Sir Henry's Character.—Mr. Henry Flood.—The Minister deserted on all Sides.—Resolution for a free Trade carried unanimously.—This Circumstance one of the remote Causes of the Union.—Rapid Progress of the Volunteers.—Extraordinary military Honours paid to the Duke of Leinster.—Attempts to seduce the Volunteers.—Fencible Regiments raised.—Their Unpopularity.—Disbanded.—Earl of Charlemont.—His Character.—Free Trade granted to Ireland by the British Parliament.—The Irish, unsatisfied, declare for constitutional Independence.—The Volunteers formed into Provincial Armies.—Unpleasant Affair between the Dublin Corps, under Lord Westport (late Marquis of Sligo) and the regular Troops, under Lieutenant Doyne.—Universal Declarations of the Irish to obey no Laws but those of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland.—Magistrates refuse to billet Soldiers, under the British Mutiny Act.—The Duke of Leinster's Popularity declines.—His Character.—Exemplary Conduct of the Catholics.—James Napper Tandy.

WHILE those transactions were taking place throughout the country, a memorable and unexpected event occurred in the Irish Parliament.—It has heretofore been observed, that the Irish House of Commons had, by the ascendancy of the close boroughs, lost the tone of a genuine representation; and by an

habitual accedance to all the recommendations of the Irish Vice-roy, the spirit of that Parliament had been so systematically depressed, that it was not likely (without the occurrence of some unforeseen events) to take any very decided or persevering steps toward the acquirement either of commercial or legislative liberty. But the sessions of 1779-80 commenced with a scene, which, while it elevated the Irish people to the height of expectation, and inspired them with a new confidence, paralyzed the British Government,—and, for the first moment, made known decidedly to the councils of that country, that they had no longer to deal with a timid, dispirited, and unprotected nation.

The adoption of non-importation and non-consumption agreements, had already created considerable anxiety in the British Minister as to the probable result of the ensuing Session,*—and the Lord Lieutenant was directed to open the Parliament with a speech, remotely alluding to his Majesty's sentiments of liberality, but without specifying any measure of concession—and so cautiously guarded, as neither to alarm the Public, nor commit the

* After the non-importation agreements had taken place, a privy council was called, by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and it was there proposed, that some decided steps might be taken to allay the clamours of the *English* manufacturers, by endeavouring to counteract these resolutions; however, such was the general feeling at that time, that even the *discussion* of such a subject was rejected by the council, and no *public* effort was made to discourage that proceeding.

Government:—but the days of insipidity had now passed away;—the Viceroy's speeches from the throne, for almost a century, had been composed * nearly in the same common-place language and trite observation,—and the addresses of both Houses, in reply to those speeches, had been almost invariably mere echoes of the speech itself, with general assurances of liberal supplies and increasing loyalty.

On the opening of this Session, however, there appeared a more than common sensation amongst the leading members of Parliament—the strong and animated declarations of public sentiment which had been published during the prorogation, made an extraordinary impression,—but the extent or consequences of that impression could not be ascertained, until the proceedings of the House of Commons gave an opportunity of observing what effect the new spirit of the people would now have upon the conduct of their representatives

* It is remarkable, that the *speeches* made by the Lord Lieutenant, and the birth-day *odes* by the Poets Laureat, generally comprised the same common-place topics—and had very little variation in them for almost fifty years ! The similarity of those State papers were sometimes so striking, that it was observed in Parliament, by a facetious member, (Sir John Stewart Hamilton) that if the Poet Laureat could write prose, or the Lord Lieutenant's Secretary verses, there would be no occasion for more than one of those officers.

At length the Parliament assembled ;*—the anxious and inquisitive eye of the Secretary and of the steady partisans of Government passed rapidly throughout the whole House—alarmed by the appearance of some unusual resistance, they endeavoured, from the looks—the suggestions—the manner of the members, to prejudge the result of the first night's debate, which had generally decided the complexion of the ensuing session—but no sagacity could have anticipated the turn which Irish affairs were to receive on that night—no human foresight could have predicted that blow which the system of the British cabinet was about to receive by one single sentence—or have foreseen that that single sentence would be the composition of the first law officer of the Irish Government.

The Lord Lieutenant's speech was delivered by him, in the House of Lords, in the accustomed tone of confidence, ambiguity, and frivolous recommendations ;† and in the Commons, the usual echo and adulatory address was moved by Sir Robert Deane—a person completely devoted to the views of Government.—A pause succeeded, and an unusual communication was perceivable between several members on the Government and the Opposition sides of the

* This was the first session of any Irish Parliament, where decided and effective measures were adopted for the country. It met on the 12th of October, 1779.

† The only pointed sentences in this speech were, a congratulation on the birth of a young prince—and a recommendation to promote *Protestant charter-schools*.

House. A decided resistance to the usual qualified address now became certain;—the Secretary, moving irresolutely from place to place, was seen endeavouring to collect the individual opinions of the members—and the law officers of the Crown evinced a diffidence never before observable in their department; throughout the whole House a new sense of expectation and anxiety was evident.

At length Mr. Henry Grattan arose, with a somewhat more than usual solemnity;—he seemed labouring with his own thoughts, and preparing his mind for a more than ordinary exertion.—The address and the language of this extraordinary man were perfectly original; from his first essay in Parliament, a strong sensation had been excited by the point and eccentricity of his powerful eloquence;—nor was it long until those transcendent talents—which afterwards distinguished this celebrated personage—were perceived rising above ordinary capacities, and, as a charm, communicating to his countrymen that energy, that patriotism, and that perseverance, for which he himself became so eminently distinguished:—his action—his tone—his elocution in public speaking, bore no resemblance to that of any other person;—the flights of genius—the arrangements of composition—and the solid strength of connected reasoning, were singularly blended in his fiery, yet deliberative language;—he thought in logic, and he spoke in antithesis; his irony and his satire, rapid and epigrammatic, bore

down all opposition, and left him no rival in the broad field of eloquent invective;—his ungraceful action, however, and the hesitating tardiness of his first sentences, conveyed no favorable impression to those who listened only to his exordium—but the progress of his brilliant and manly eloquence soon absorbed every idea, but that of admiration at the overpowering extent of his intellectual faculties.

This was Mr. Henry Grattan of 1779,—in the vicissitudes of whose subsequent life will be remarked three distinct eras of public character, and disgusting proofs of popular inconsistency—the era of his glory—the era of his calumny—and the era of his resurrection;—in the first, elevated to a pitch of unbounded gratification, by the attachment, the gratitude, and the munificence of his countrymen;—in the second, despoiled of health, of happiness, and of character, by the artifices of a powerful enemy,* and the

* The animosity which Lord Clare professed and exercised toward Mr. Grattan, was of the most *vindictive* and unprincipled nature—and carried to such an extent, by means of his extraordinary power and influence, as would probably have ended in the destruction of that Gentleman, had not the implacability of Lord Clare's own character diminished the weight of his accusations, and the effect of proceedings, which were known to be founded on personal animosity.

The secret committee of the House of Commons could not be brought over to his purposes;—but he used effective measures to have Mr. Grattan's name brought before the secret committee of the Lords, and alluded to by their report. This circumstance Lord

proscription of an ungrateful people ;—and in the third, rising from the bed of sickness—re-embarking a shattered frame in the service of his country—and again receiving the most adulatory eulogies on his political virtue from that very inconsistent body which had traduced him for political enormities—and elected by acclamation the representative of that metropolis which had shortly before voted him unworthy even of his freedom.—In Parliament, he taught the doctrines of Molyneux and of Lucas—he drew the true constitutional distinctions between the Crown and the Government—the magistrate and the function—the individual and the sceptre.—But the partiality of the friend may possibly bias the pen of the historian ;*—his public principles will be best ascertained by tracing the undeviating line of his public conduct.

Clare and his partisans propagated with *incredible* assiduity ; and both Mr. Grattan and the Bishop of Down (Doctor Dixon) were absolutely *denounced* by his Lordship in the privy council ;—but the vindictive objects of his Lordship were then so strongly perceivable, that many members of the council resolutely ventured to oppose Lord Clare's views upon that subject. Sir John Blaquiere, Mr. Denis Browne, and several others, though political adversaries of Mr. Grattan, resisted his Lordship on that occasion ;—yet so artfully was the defamation spread at that time, that many of Mr. Grattan's *own personal friends* were staggered by the steadiness with which his Lordship persisted ; and it was not until after Mr. Grattan had boldly assailed and silenced Lord Clare, by a printed reply, that the public mind was completely satisfied upon that subject.

* The author of this work commenced his political life as the parliamentary opponent of Mr. Grattan on many political subjects ;—and the progress of that opposition gave rise

The career of this extraordinary man yet remains unfinished.— But though he has not survived himself—he has survived his country—he has lived to view the demolition of that noble fabric raised by the exertion of his own virtue and perseverance—and the catastrophe of that constitution, which—“ as he watched over it in it's cradle, so he attended it to it's grave.”—

It is in vain to expect, from the cool temperature of approaching age, the brilliant animation of more youthful energy ;—though judgment may be increased, and wisdom may remain stationary, years irresistibly diminish the fire of eloquence, and contract the wandering beauties of imagination ;—the stability of his attachment to Ireland has been proved rather by his inflexible integrity than by his latter exertions—his spirit seemed to droop, from the period of the annexation of his country—and his talent, overpowered and abashed, has let fall it's keenest weapons. The humiliating transmission of an illustrious Irishman to a foreign legislature, and repugnant incorporation with a new and uncongenial people, pulls down the pride of natural superiority—checks the active exercise of decaying talent—and has seated Mr. Grattan

to an intimate knowledge of his character, and in time excited a friendship in the author, which can only terminate with his existence ;—he is, therefore, in some degree disqualified to dilate more *minutely* on the character of a living friend, whose past political career remains open to less partial observation—and whose future course remains yet to be recorded.

in the British Parliament, as an honorable memento of his Irish greatness.

After an oration, replete with the most luminous reasoning—the severest censure—pathetic and irresistible eloquence—Mr. Grattan moved an amendment to the address, viz. “That we beseech your Majesty to believe, that it is with the utmost reluctance we are constrained to approach you on the present occasion ;—but the constant drain to supply absentees, and the unfortunate prohibition of our trade, have caused such calamity, that the natural support of our country has decayed, and our manufacturers are dying for want ;—famine stalks hand in hand with hopeless wretchedness,—and the only means left to support the expiring trade of this miserable part of your Majesty’s dominions, is to open a free export trade, and let your Irish subjects enjoy their natural birthright.”

His arguments had been so conclusive—his positions so self-evident—his language so vigorous and determined—his predictions so alarming—and the impression which those combined qualities made upon the House was so deep, and so extensive, that the supporters of Government, paralyzed and passive, seemed almost ready to resign the victory, before they had even attempted a resistance.

This amendment was seconded and warmly supported by Lord Westport, who at that time assumed the highest tone of a patriot,

and had adopted the strongest language of practical independence,*—the proud recollection of which, even now somewhat protects his ashes from the blasts of that desolating apostasy, which, in 1800, belied the whole tenor of his former conduct—and tarnished the latter periods of his political existence.

The confusion which now appeared on the Treasury bench was very remarkable, because very unusual. The Secretary, (Sir Richard Heron) for the first time, showed a painful mistrust in the steadiness of his followers; he perceived that the spirit of the House was rising into a storm, which all the influence of his office would not be able to allay—direct opposition would be injudicious, if not fatal—palpable evasion would be altogether impracticable—the temporizing system was almost worn out—and procrastination seemed to yield no better prospect of a favorable issue;—the officers of Government sat sullenly on their benches, awaiting their customary cue from the lips of the Minister—but he was too skilful to commit himself to a labyrinth, from whence return was so difficult and precarious,—and all was silent.—At

* Lord Westport (the late Marquis of Sligo) was son to the Earl of Altamont, who commanded the Mayo legion of Irish Volunteers. Lord Westport commanded a corps in Dublin, and on all occasions was a zealous advocate for Irish independence;—his public declarations of that day will appear in the progress of this history—but on the Union question, he relinquished all his original principles, and became an efficient supporter of that measure.

length Sir Henry Cavendish hesitatingly arose, to declare his dissent to this first decided effort of the Irish Parliament to assert its liberties.

Sir Henry Cavendish was one of those persons who are generally found in the front of a popular assembly, the mediocrity of whose general talents disqualifying them from the higher order of politicians, acquire notoriety by becoming the controllers and oracles of some insulated department.—Though possessed of a plain, shrewd, and sufficiently comprehensive understanding—abundance of craft—a convenient temper—and imposing plausibility—Sir Henry found himself unequal to the depth and latitude of constitutional reasoning; and after unavailing efforts to acquire the fame of an accomplished rhetorician, he contented himself with a pre-eminence in the science of stenography,* and the reputation of profound knowledge in parliamentary precedents

* Sir Henry was so expert at short-hand, that he was correct even to a word—and frequently, during important debates, sent the most remarkable speeches to the Castle, to gratify the solicitude of the impatient Viceroy. His Excellency, after a warm debate, (during which Sir Henry seceded from the Devonshire party), asked Sir Hercules Langrishe, if Sir Henry had taken *notes* that night?—The Baronet, affecting not to understand the tenor of his Excellency's question, pleasantly replied, that he believed Sir Henry had taken either *notes or ready money*, but he could not exactly inform his Excellency which.—Sir Henry went into office immediately after.

and points of order,—in both of which he acquired so much celebrity, that he had scarcely a competitor.

He was ever prepared with a chronological string of absolute parliamentary precedents, appropriate to every question, and adapted to every circumstance, which he skilfully contrived to substitute for reasoning, and oppose to argument—and should his prolific memory chance to fail him in the quotation of his documents, his inventive genius never let the subject fail for want of an auxiliary.

On points of order he was at least as garrulous as orthodox, and peculiarly expert at critical interruption; under colour of keeping order, he assumed a license for transgressing it,—and in affecting to check the digression of others, he frequently made it the first figure of his own rhetoric;—he was admirably calculated for desultory debate—when he was right, he was concise—when he was wrong, he was pertinacious, sarcastic, obstinate, plausible, persevering—he gained time when he could not make proselytes, and became the very essence and soul of disorder and procrastination;—steady to his interest, his politics were elastic*—but good manners, good sense, and some good qualities in private life, softened down the inequalities of his public character;

* Sir Henry Cavendish had changed his politics with different Governments, but always came round to the *productive* point, and died Receiver General of the Revenues of Ireland.

and gave him all the advantages of having been born a gentleman. Sir Henry was well aware that he durst not venture an unqualified negative, and endeavoured craftily to administer his panacea of precedents, and to propose what he termed "something more orderly in the House, and more gracious to the Sovereign." He said he would vote against the amendment—that the business would be better effected by following a precedent in the year 1661, when the Lords and Commons of Ireland appointed commissioners to attend the King—to "supplicate the redress of grievances."

The die was now cast—and a resistance to the measure was announced and proceeded on. Mr. Scott (Attorney General) endeavoured to support Sir Henry—but as if conscious of his ultimate failure, he appeared almost a new character;—the bold audacity of his address degenerated into an insidious plausibility—his arrogance fled without an effort—and for once in his life he was tame, vapid, and equivocal;—an ardent spirit now burst forth from every quarter of the House. Mr. Henry Flood, a most prominent personage in Irish history, whose endowments were great, and whose character was distinguished—the Provost—Mr. Ogle—Sir Edward Newnham—and many others—declared their coincidence with the amendment. But though it stated, in true and pathetic language, the miseries Ireland was subject to, by reason of her absentees, it pressed too strongly on the tenderest

spot of the interest of Britons, to admit of their concurrence; while, on the other side, it was conceived not to be thoroughly explicit—and not sufficiently peremptory;—the object was most important—the moment was most critical—procrastination would be ruin—and the amendment was exceptionable. These difficulties had been foreseen.

Mr. Hussey Burgh (the Prime-Serjeant) at length arose from the Treasury bench, with that proud dignity so congenial to his character, and declared, that he never would support any Government, in fraudulently concealing from the King the rights of his people;—that the high office which he possessed could hold no competition with his principles and his conscience, and he should consider the relinquishment of his gown only as a just sacrifice upon the altar of his country;—that strong statement, rather than pathetic supplication, was adapted to the crisis; and he proposed to Mr. Grattan to substitute for his amendment the following words—“ That, it is not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin.”

The effect of his speech * was altogether indescribable, nor is it easily to be conceived by those who were not witnesses of that

* The author of this memoir was present at that memorable debate, (if debate it can be called) and the impression it then made upon his mind can never be effaced. The depression on the one side—the exultation on the other—the new sensation on both—the

remarkable transaction ; the House, quick in it's conception, and rapidly susceptible of every impression, felt the whole force of this unexpected and important secession. The character—the talents—the eloquence of this great man, bore down every symptom of further resistance ;—many of the usual supporters of Government, and some of the Viceroy's immediate connections, instantly followed his example, and in a moment the victory was decisive,—not a single negative could the Minister procure,—and Mr. Burgh's amendment passed unanimously, amidst a tumult of joy and exultation.

This triumph of Irish patriotism, made an instantaneous and powerful impression on the minds of the people ;—it was their first victory, and the ministers' first discomfiture. The volunteers attributed this unexpected success to the impressions which their spirit had diffused throughout the country, and they determined to adopt this measure, as if it had been their own offspring—and thereby identify the virtues of the Parliament with the energies of the people. On the circumstance being announced, the drums

obvious feeling which this unexpected event excited in the galleries, crowded by six or seven hundred of the most respectable persons out of Parliament, and a great number of ladies of high rank—the general congratulation on the spirit of the Parliament, was a scene so remarkable, as never to be forgotten ; but is attended by the sad reflection, that Mr. Burgh did not long survive the service he did his country—nor did his country long survive the service which he rendered it.

beat to arms—the volunteer associations collected in every part of the metropolis—and they resolved to line the streets, and accompany to the gates of the Castle that part of the legislative body which moved in solemn procession, to present their wholesome warning into the hands of the Viceroy.

The secession of Mr. Burgh from the Government, was not more important than that of Mr. Connolly, brother-in-law to the Viceroy, and Mr. Burton Cunningham, a constant supporter of ministerial measures—men in high estimation and of large fortunes—which gave Mr. Grattan an opportunity for observing, that “the people were thus getting landed security for the attainment of their liberties.”

The effect of this measure, though in its nature inconclusive, appeared to lay the first stone of Irish independence, and greatly increased both the numbers and confidence of the Volunteer associations.*

* The secret history of this celebrated amendment is worthy of recording; as it proves that the measures adopted by Ireland, at that period, were not the work of party or of faction, but the result of the secret and deliberate consideration of the most able and virtuous men of the Irish nation.

In the month of October 1779, Mr. Dennis Daly, a man of great abilities, large fortune, exquisite eloquence, and high character, together with Mr. Grattan, withdrew themselves to Bray, (a village ten miles from the metropolis) there to deliberate privately on the most effectual means of attaining the just rights of their country;—previous confidential

Several attempts had been previously made to fix the attention of the British Legislature on the distressed and dangerous situation of Ireland ; but every such effort had proved totally abortive. Although the critical state of that country had been discussed in both Houses of Parliament, and addresses had been voted to the King,* requesting his immediate attention to the affairs of Ireland, to which favorable answers had been returned by his Majesty ; and though the Irish Commons had also framed a reso-

communications had taken place between them and Mr. Perry, then Speaker of the House of Commons, who recommended a strong and comprehensive amendment to the address of the ensuing session, as the first step to be taken on the occasion. Mr. Grattan drew up one amendment—Mr. Daly another—and Mr. Daly's, in his own hand-writing, formed that which Mr. Grattan moved in the Commons.

At the same time similar communications had taken place between Mr. Hussey Burgh and Mr. Henry Flood, which gave rise to the amendment moved by Mr. Burgh, which embraced but the single point, a "*free trade.*"

Both these amendments were considered at first as unattainable ;—but that proposed by Mr. Grattan leaning heavily on *absentees*, the friends of that body did not, from the complexion of the House, wish to hazard any division respecting them ; and therefore, to avoid such discussion, acceded to Mr. Burgh's amendment, which did *not* allude to absentees, to avoid Mr. Grattan's, which did ;—and to this circumstance is to be attributed the unaccountable unanimity with which the measure passed both Houses of Parliament—and the extraordinary secession of Mr. Connolly, and other weighty supporters of Administration.

* 11th October, 1779.

lution, in the language of more than common expostulation ; yet the subject passed away from the attention of the Ministers, and even this session closed ; affording only further and decided proofs of their temporizing duplicity.

A determined reluctance to enter seriously on the affairs of Ireland, or concede to her any measures which might encroach upon the most trivial interest of England, was now too obvious to be misconceived or disbelieved. Great Britain was not as yet sufficiently alarmed, to become just ; the probable loss of America had not as yet warned her against the fatal infatuations of her jealousy and of her avarice ;—she could not as yet be persuaded that the Irish people were competent to the redress of their own grievances ; and she considered the warmth of their public declarations only as the brilliant flashes of a temporary patriotism, which the usual measures of Parliamentary corruption could at pleasure extinguish.

England was aware, that the same revolution which had confirmed her liberties, had subjected to her power the rights and liberties of the sister nation ; and conceiving herself still paramount to justice and to policy, she felt too proud and too powerful as yet to bend her attention to the grievances which she had herself inflicted ;—instead, therefore, of offering to Ireland any measure of national relief or substantial benefit, the British Legislature, with an affectation of candour, in 1779,

enacted two insipid and illusory statutes, and offered them, with an affectation of liberality, to Ireland, as a compensation for the restraints of her commerce,* and the destruction of her constitution.

The insurrection of the American States had deprived England of a certain importation of tobacco from that quarter—and by the armed neutrality of the Northern powers, her supply of hemp

* The following curious circumstance may stand as a general illustration of the whole commercial system practised towards Ireland:—Previous to the reign of George II. Ireland was prohibited from importing any colonial commodities direct from the plantations;—it was necessary, previously to landing all those commodities in England, to pay the duties there, and then re-ship them for Irish ports. This was represented as a most intolerable restriction on Irish commerce; and on strong remonstrances being made on the subject, the Minister of that day informed the Irish Parliament, that the British Legislature would pass an act “to SATISFY them on that point.” The promised statute was accordingly passed, which is the 24th Geo. II. chap. 13. By that act, Ireland was permitted to import directly from the Plantations into their own country, “ALL goods of the growth, produce, or manufacture of the said Plantations—EXCEPT sugars, tobacco, indigo, cotton, wool, molasses, ginger, pitch, tar, turpentine, masts, yards and bowsprits, Speckee wood, Jamaica wood, fustic or other dying woods, rice, beaver skins, or any other furs, or copper ore.” Thus this statute, instead of repealing, in fact RE-ENACTED these restrictions; and EXCEPTS, in direct terms, from importation, by Ireland, EVERY article the PRODUCE of the Plantations, save RUM, which exception was obviously intended to facilitate the importation of *West-India* spirits, and raise thereby a competition *against* the infant distilleries of Ireland.

having become scanty and precarious, in mockery of her distresses, these two statutes granted to Ireland a permission to propagate those two vegetables, if her climate should be found congenial to their cultivation;* and then the British Ministers triumphantly instructed the Chief Governor to extract from the Irish Parliament an adulatory address, expressive of "their warmest thanks to his Majesty, for these his most gracious and condescending attentions and regards to the trade, prosperity, and true interests of Ireland."

This measure, however, ostentatiously termed a liberal concession by Great Britain, was considered as an aggravating insult by Ireland;—it was also bad policy—developing the arbitrary and dishonest principle by which Ireland continued to be governed,

* The first of these statutes permitted the Irish "to propagate tobacco,"—a permission which could confer no possible advantage, save that of enabling them to make a very small quantity of bad snuff, for home consumption, with an excise duty equivalent to the customs on importation.

The second statute gave them permission, or encouragement, to propagate *hemp*, but rendered the boon totally inoperative, by English statutes, which *prohibited* the exportation of *sail cloth*. And thus encouraged the waste of land and of labour, in raising the *primum*, and then discouraging the sale of the manufacture. The consequence of the measure was, that in a short time the hempen manufacture totally disappeared, and above 30,000 persons (mostly manufacturers) emigrated from Ulster in two years.—(*Report Commons Journals*, Vol. XVI. page 381.)

and proclaimed to the whole world that the Irish people had been theretofore debarred from even the cultivation of their own soil—the free exercise of their agricultural industry—or the enjoyment of that fertility with which the bounteous hand of Providence had enriched their country. A system more impolitic had never been adopted by any civilized nation, even toward the meanest of her colonies.

This illusory and injudicious attempt to conciliate Ireland, operated also directly contrary to the views and expectations of the Minister;—these bills were received with disgust and reprobation in Ireland, and added an additional and poignant stimulus to the discontents and rising spirit of an irritated nation.

Some powerful friends of Ireland at length began zealously to espouse her interests. The good Earl Nugent, whose memory and character is still revered by those who recollect the sincerity of his attachment to that country in 1778, made an effort in the British Lords to call their attention to the distresses of Ireland; but his efforts were ineffectual. The same Nobleman soon after repeated the same effort, but his weight and abilities were not equal to his zeal and integrity. His motion was treated with an unbecoming superciliousness by Lord North—and death unfortunately soon after deprived his country of one of its truest friends and most dignified and honest advocates.

The Earl of Shelburne, in the Lords, and the Earl of Upper Ossory, in the Commons, also made attempts to criminate the British Ministers for their pertinacious and culpable neglect of the affairs of Ireland, and proposed strong resolutions in both Houses, declaratory of the dangerous state of that country, and the delinquency of the Ministers.* But though the censure was well timed

* The following resolution was moved, by the Earl of Shelburne, (as an opposition motion) in the British House of Lords, on the 1st day of December, 1779:

“ Resolved, That it is highly criminal in his Majesty’s Ministers to have neglected taking effectual measures for the relief of the kingdom of Ireland, in consequence of the address of this House of the 11th of May, and of his Majesty’s most gracious answer; and to have suffered the discontents of that country to rise to such a height, as evidently to endanger the constitutional connection between the two kingdoms, and to create new embarrassments to the public councils, through division and diffidence, in a moment when real unanimity, grounded upon mutual *confidence and affection*, is confessedly essential to the *preservation* of what is left of the British empire.”

After a short debate, this motion was rejected.

For the motion, 37 Lords. Against it, 82.

A similar motion was made in the Commons, by Lord Upper Ossory, the 6th day of December, 1779, seconded by Lord Middleton, which was also rejected by a majority of 173 to 100. It appears, thus, that so little was the real state of Ireland at that time suspected, that not one half of the Commons conceived this subject as of sufficient importance to require their attendance on debating it. It is somewhat remarkable, however, that Lord Shelburne, on the debate, in May 1779, unguardedly termed the Irish an *irritated mob*; but when he became alarmed for his estates, the December following, he called them a *magnanimous people*.

and well founded, the motives of the noble movers did not proceed from exactly the same feeling which actuated the resident inhabitants of Ireland;—neither of those Noblemen had been habitual friends to the general interests of that country—both of them were total absentees—they possessed large estates in Ireland, and trembled for their properties—they acted in general opposition to the Government, and wished to register the culpability of their adversaries. Their motions were, after very sharp debates, rejected in both Houses, and Ireland became fully and finally convinced, that it was not through the occasional exertion of Irish emigrants, in a foreign Legislature, that she was to seek for the recovery of her rights, and alleviation of her miseries.

Applications to the Government—petitions to the Parliament—and supplications to the Crown, had all been tried in vain; neither the bold remonstrances of right, nor the piercing cries of necessity, could reach the royal ear, or penetrate the circle of Ministers which surrounded the British Throne, and concealed from the Irish King a distinct view of his Irish people;—humble and pathetic language had failed—the voice of the nation was exhausted by unavailing supplication—and it now became full time to act in the cause of liberty, founded on the principles of self-preservation.

Such being the ascertained disposition of the whole body of the people, not a moment was to be lost in the adoption of some measure, too strong to be despised by Ministers, and too moderate to be dangerous to the connection;—delay might now terminate all the hopes of Ireland—the crisis might pass away—the public spirit might cool—and the moment so auspicious to the interests of the nation might be lost for ever. Though this determination quickly circulated throughout the whole country, the people still acted with that deliberate firmness, which, of all conduct, is the most fatal to a political adversary, and adds most strength and character to popular proceedings.

The personages who then led Ireland forward to her bloodless victory, well knew the inestimable value of that prudent principle; they were men of great abilities—profound wisdom—and that effective patriotism, which considers activity it's necessary friend, but precipitation it's most dangerous enemy. They instructed the people, that while they acted with undeviating firmness, they should also act with prudential moderation—that the suspended liberties of a people were most likely to be recovered from a powerful oppressor, by a determined but cool and progressive perseverance—that by a deliberate system none would be alarmed—wise men would be attended to—the impetuous be restrained—the wavering confirmed—and the people steadied—patriotism and confidence would grow up together, and become more intimately

blended, and the whole nation, without alarm, be imperceptibly led to one common centre—and become competent to achieve the strongest measures, before they were well aware that they had commenced the preparation for them.

They were instructed that, on the other hand, undigested and impetuous proceedings, if not successful, by the first rapidity of their execution, in general defeat their own object, and rivet the chains of that country which they were intended to emancipate—that it is more practicable to advance on gradual claims, than recede from extravagant determinations—and that the inevitable miseries of civil war, however justifiable upon the principles and precedent of constitutional resistance, established at the revolution, should be the last resource even of an enslaved people—and that though the Irish were armed, and might demand concession, in the attitude and tone of confidence, it would be much wiser to give their incipient proceedings the weight and character of citizens, and reserve for the last extremity the threat of soldiers;—that England, by this means, would be sufficiently informed of the determination of Ireland, without feeling her pride too much hurt, to propose a negotiation, or so much alarmed, as to prepare for resistance.

This discreet reasoning had it's full effect upon the generality of the nation; and though the ebullitions of public feeling occasionally broke forth in ardent resolutions of the Volunteer

associations—the temperate system was generally adopted; and it was only upon fully experiencing it's final failure; that the exhilarating shouts of an embattled people were heard reverberating from every quarter of a military country.

Public resolutions neither to import, purchase, or consume any British manufacture or commodity whatever, were now universally but peaceably adopted throughout the whole island—a measure at all times justifiable by any people, who may have been deprived of their commerce and their constitution by the power or the machinations of an insidious neighbour.

Inundated as Ireland had been with every species of British manufacture, there could be no step so just—so moderate; or which promised so many beneficial consequences, as the total exclusion from the Irish markets of every commodity which she was herself competent to manufacture, or of which she could possibly dispense with the immediate consumption. This step had been partially resorted to in 1778; however, it was not until after the grievances of Ireland could be no longer endured, and she found that nothing but deceptive and insulting propositions, without sufficient latitude to be beneficial, or security to be permanent, were offered for her acceptance, that these adverse resolutions became almost universal—spread themselves, like a rapid flame, throughout every village of the island, and were zealously promoted by almost every individual in the country. At

length, a general meeting was convened by the High Sheriffs of the city of Dublin, and resolutions* then entered into by the whole metropolis; which finally confirmed and consummated that judicious measure, and at length convinced Great Britain, that Ireland would no longer submit to insult and domination,

* THOLSEL, DUBLIN.

At a general meeting of the Freemen and Freeholders of the City of Dublin, convened by
public notice,

William James and John Exshaw (the *present Alderman*) High Sheriffs, in the chair,

The following Resolutions, amongst others, were unanimously agreed to:

“ That we will not, from the date hereof, until the *grievances of this country* shall be removed, directly or indirectly import or consume ANY of the manufactures of *Great Britain*; nor will we deal with any merchant, or shop-keeper, who shall import such manufactures; and that we recommend an adoption of a similar agreement to all our countrymen who regard the commerce and constitution of this country.

“ Resolved unanimously, That we highly applaud the manly and patriotic sentiments of the several corps of Merchants, Independent Dublin, Liberty, and Goldsmiths’ Volunteers, and heartily thank them for their demonstration of zeal and ardour in the cause of their country—and that we shall ever be ready to join with them in defending our rights and constitution, and gladly and cheerfully contribute to protect them from prosecution or persecution.

Signed, JOHN EXSHAW, Sheriff.”

N. B. This resolution had been preceded, some months before, by similar resolutions in Galway and other parts of Ireland; but the nation could not be considered as having generally adopted those sentiments, till they were sanctioned by the metropolis.

and had commenced a gradation of active proceedings, of which the climax might ultimately, though unfortunately, produce a rupture of the connection.

These resolutions were enforced with rigor and strictness; few men, however their interest might be affected, would wantonly risk the imputation of being traitors to their country, and encounter the dangers of popular retribution, which was, in some few instances, actually inflicted.

The nation now paused for a moment; it found itself prepared to commence its great work of constitutional regeneration, and stood steadily and firmly watching, with an anxious eye, for the operation of this first overt act of determined patriotism. The people had now ascended an eminence, sufficiently elevated to give them a full view of their friends and of their enemies—they had peaceably hoisted the first standard, and made the first proclamation of liberty. A mutual compact of the citizen to support the soldier, and the soldier to defend the citizen, formed a very remarkable feature in all their resolutions—and though the military associations had not (as such) yet assumed a deliberative capacity, it was obvious that their discretion alone had continued the distinction—and that though they spoke by two tongues, there was in fact but one heart amongst the people.

This bold measure, however it may have been eclipsed by the more striking importance of events, which succeeded each other

in a rapid progression, yet had a momentous influence on the subsequent fate and policy of Ireland—and must be considered as the commencement of that interesting course of political transactions, which suddenly raised her to the highest pitch of national pride and prosperity, and afterwards hurled her down the destructive precipice of misery and degradation.

The spirited adoption and obstinate adherence of the Irish people to these resolutions, now flashed as a new light full in the eyes of the British Administration. The power of the English statutes, which bound the commerce of Ireland, was, by these resolutions, almost at the same moment denied and demolished, without the aid of arms, or tumult of insurrection—and the pride and power of Great Britain received that warning blow, which taught her what she had reason to expect from a further perseverance in her favorite system. The Ministry were astonished—the arm of usurpation, which had so long wielded alternately the sword and commanded the coffer, fell paralyzed and lifeless by the side of the usurpers—Ireland began to raise her head—and assumed a new countenance and a novel character. But the fate of empires is governed by the same fatality as the chequered life of individuals; and this very measure, which so auspiciously and proudly asserted, and the events which afterwards so completely acquired the constitutional independence and commercial freedom of Ireland, will be found the incipient cause of ultimately

revoking those great acquirements. England, compelled to concede, was determined to reclaim, and from the first hours of reluctant concession, pursued that deep and insidious system, which will be fully traced and developed in the course of Irish transactions, and will be found conspicuously active, from the commercial tariff of 1784, through every stage of the regency, and the rebellion—to the completion of that measure entitled a legislative Union between the two countries.

The Volunteer associations of the Metropolis soon perceived, that however numerous their force and extensive their popularity, it required some strong link of connection to unite military bodies, so entirely distinct and independent of each other—who acknowledged no superior to their respective commanders—and no control but voluntary obedience.

To secure their unanimity, perhaps even their permanence, it required some consolidating authority, whose weight might restrain within proper limits the uncontrolled spirits of a body, assuming the double capacity of a soldier and of a citizen.

This essential object could only be attained by the selection of some high and dignified personage, whose rank and character, rising beyond the reach of common competition, might unite together, under one common chief, that diversity of views and objects, which must ever distract the proceedings of detached associations.

The Volunteers saw clearly, that military bodies, however laudable their views, must be more than commonly subject to the fallibility of human institutions; and that to have the effect and impetus of an army, they must submit themselves fully to it's control and organization.

They did not, however, long hesitate in their choice of a commander;—every eye seemed to turn, by general instinct, on James Duke of Leinster.—His family, from the earliest periods, had been favorites of the people—he had himself, when Marquis of Kildare, been the popular representative for Dublin—he was the only Duke of Ireland—his disposition and his address combined almost every quality which could endear him to the nation. The honesty of his heart might occasionally mislead the accuracy of his judgment—but he always intended right—and his political errors usually sprung from the principle of moderation.

This amiable Nobleman was therefore unanimously elected, by the armed bodies of the metropolis, their General, and was immediately invested with all the honors of so high a situation;—a guard of volunteers was mounted at his door—a body guard appointed to attend him on public occasions—and centinels placed on his box when he honored the theatre;—he was followed with acclamations whenever he appeared; and something approaching to regal honors attended his investiture.*

* A whimsical circumstance took place on this occasion, which shows the extreme credulity with which every intelligence respecting Ireland, was then swallowed in Great

This was the first measure of the Volunteers towards the formation of a regular army;—it's novelty and splendor added greatly to it's importance, and led the way to the subsequent appointments which soon after completed their organization.—The mild and unassuming disposition of the Duke, tending, by it's example, to restrain the over zeal of an armed and irritated nation, did not contribute much to increase the energy of their proceedings, and at no distant period deprived him, for a moment, of a portion of that popularity which his conduct (with but little deviation) entitled him to, down to the last moments of his existence.

A new scene now presented itself to the view of the British Minister, and embarrassed, to an unparalleled degree, every

Britain.—The appointment of the Duke, as General in Chief, was celebrated by the Volunteers in College-green, with great solemnity. Their artillery was ordered out, and a vast concourse of people were assembled.—The Captain of a Whitehaven collier, who had just landed, and come unexpectedly to the spot, on enquiring the reason of such rejoicing, was jocularly informed, that the people were crowning the Duke King of Ireland. He waited for no further information—got back with all expedition to his vessel in the bay, and sailed instantly for Liverpool; where he made an affidavit, before the Mayor, that he was present, and saw the Duke of Leinster crowned King of Ireland the preceding day. An express was instantly dispatched to London with the affidavit to the British Ministers—a cabinet council was immediately summoned, to deliberate on this alarming intelligence, when the arrival of the regular mail dissipated their consternation, by stating the real causes of the rejoicing.

measure of the Irish Administration.—A regular army, composed of every rank of society—raised—armed—and disciplined in the midst of the metropolis—independent of the Crown, and unconnected with the Government—disdaining all authority of either over their military concerns—and, under the eye of the Viceroy, appointing a commander in chief, and avowing the determination to free their country, or perish in its ruins*—the standing army tame spectators of this extraordinary spectacle—and almost participating the flame which they might be called upon to extinguish;—the Government, irresolute, and shrinking within the Castle, not only tolerated, but even affected to countenance, this unparalleled procedure. The new commander of the Volunteers was received and recognised by the public authorities, and the regular soldiery at length involuntarily paid him the same military attentions as their own commanders.

But though the Government, from policy, affected to bear the sight with complacency and patience, they reflected, with the deepest solicitude, on the situation of the country, and secretly made every effort to divide or weaken the military associations.—Every device was used to seduce the soldier from his officers, or to detach the most popular officers from the command of the

* The following label was affixed over the mouth of the Volunteer cannon—"A Free Trade, or —"

soldiers.* The one was offered commissions and pay from the Crown, the other offices in the public departments. No scheme was left untried—no means were forgotten, to achieve this object; but it was all in vain—the spirit of the people was then too high, and their patriotism too ardent, to admit of such negotiation—and every attempt became not only futile, but also gave an additional strength to the measures and declarations of the people.

The appointment of the Duke of Leinster to the command of the volunteers of the metropolis, was quickly followed by that of other district generals; and the organization of four provincial armies was regularly proceeded on; the country gentlemen, of the highest consideration and largest fortune, vied with each other in their efforts to promote it;—many leading members of the Irish

* Two years afterwards, more successful attempts were made.—The Irish Parliament voted 200,000*l.* to Great Britain, to raise 20,000 sailors—as a present for their constrained liberality in acceding to a free trade.—But instead of being so applied, a part of it was diverted to the purpose of raising fencible regiments in Ireland, with a view of weakening and dividing the volunteer associations, by giving pay and commissions to their officers.—This had some, but a very temporary, success.—These regiments became so extremely unpopular, that the end was frustrated;—at one period, it was feared the volunteers would disarm them;—however, at Kilkenny, being insulted by the populace, they fired on the people, and, through confusion, also fired amongst each other—and in a short time were disbanded, to the ease and satisfaction of the whole nation.

Parliament were individually active in promoting the common object—and from single corps were soon collected county regiments and provincial armies, ready to take the field at the command of their officers, and to sacrifice their lives and their properties for the emancipation of their country.

Still, however, something was wanting to complete their organization ; provincial armies had been formed and disciplined, but still these armies were independent of each other—there was no general head, to put the whole in motion—no individual to whom all would own obedience—and such an appointment seemed indispensably essential, to secure their co-operation.

But this was a task more serious and more difficult than had yet occurred. Where could be found the man, whose integrity was incorruptible—whose wisdom was profound—whose courage was invincible—yet whose moderation was conspicuous, and whose popularity was extensive?—Ireland could not boast a Washington, yet so critical was her situation at that moment, that a combination of all these qualities seemed to be requisite in the person to whom should be entrusted the guidance of eighty thousand patriot soldiers. Such a personage was not to be discovered ; and it was only left to the Volunteers to select the purest character of that day, and leave his guidance to the councils less of the concurring than of the counteracting qualities of the inferior commanders.

Public affairs in Ireland now began to wear a serious and alarming aspect.—The Leinster army appointed the Earl of Charlemont its commander in chief—the other armies proceeded rapidly in their organization. Provincial reviews were adopted; and every thing assumed the appearance of systematic movement.

The elevation of Lord Charlemont to that high command, though it formed a more decided military establishment for the Volunteer army, was probably the very means of preserving the connection between the two countries;—had the same confidence and command been entrusted to a more ardent or ambitious character, it might have been difficult to calculate on the result of combining an intemperate leader with an impatient army;—but the moderation and loyalty of Lord Charlemont gave a tone and a steadiness to the proceedings of the people, which might otherwise have pointed to a distinct independence.—His character had long preceded his elevation;—in the North, his influence was unlimited—and though the Southern and Western Volunteers had not as yet consolidated their force with the other provinces, they were in a high state of discipline and preparation, and gradually imbibed the same spirit, and adopted the same principles, which the appointment of the Earl of Charlemont had now diffused through the other parts of the Nation.

From the first moment that James Earl of Charlemont embarked in Irish politics, he proved himself to be one of the most honest and dignified personages that can be traced in the annals of Irish history;—the love of his country was interwoven with his existence—their union was complete—their separation impossible; but his talents were rather of the conducting class, and his wisdom of a deliberative nature—his mind was more pure than vigorous—more elegant than powerful—and his capacity seemed better adapted to counsel in peace, than to command in war.

Though he was not devoid of ambition, and was devoted to popularity, his principles were calm, and his moderation predominant;—for some years at the head of a great army—in the heart of a powerful people—in the hand of an injured nation—and during the most critical epocha that a kingdom ever experienced—he conducted the Irish nation with incredible temperance—and, in the midst of tempests, he flowed on, in an unruffled stream of constitutional patriotism, fertilizing the plains of liberty, and enlarging the channel of independence—but too smooth and too gentle to turn the vast machinery of radical revolution.

His view of political objects, though always honest and generally clear, were occasionally erroneous;—small objects sometimes appeared too important, and great ones too hazardous;—though

he would not temporize, he could hesitate—yet even when his decision was found wandering from the point of it's destination, it was invariably discoverable that his discretion was the seducer.

Had the unwise pertinacity of England persisted in her errors, and plunged his country into more active contest, his mildness—his constitution—and his love of order—might have unadapted him to the inevitable vicissitudes of civil commotion, or the laborious promptitude of military tactics;—but unfortunately the adoption of his counsels rendered his sword unnecessary; and by the selection of one man,* to combat for the rights and the liberties of Ireland, he raised a youthful champion for his country, whose sling soon levelled the giant of usurpation; and he wound a laurel round the bust of the deliverer, which will remain unfaded, till the very name of Ireland shall be obliterated from amongst nations.

* Mr. Grattan first came into Parliament for the borough of Charlemont. His father had been Recorder of, and Member for, the city of Dublin; he had himself been called to the Irish bar; in the practice of which profession he did not persist, and burst at once upon the Irish nation, under the public character of their deliverer, with an intrepidity and effort never before experienced in the Irish Parliament; and though in the detail of political measures, the opinion of Mr. Grattan and Lord Charlemont were not always perfectly coincident, their friendship remained unimpaired, and their intimacy undiminished.

His indisposition to the extent of Catholic liberty — nourished by the prejudice of the times — was diminished by the patriotism of the people ; — the Catholics of 1780 preferred their country to their claims, as those of 1800 preferred their claims to their country — and amongst that sect he gained by his honesty, what he lost by his intolerance, and lived just long enough to experience and to mourn the fallibility of his predictions.*

Around this Nobleman the Irish Volunteers flocked as around a fortress ; — the standard of liberty was supported by his character — the unity of the Empire was protected by his loyalty ; and as if Providence had attached him to the destinies of Ireland, he arose — he flourished — and he sunk with his country.†

* It was Lord Charlemont's opinion, that the constitution and independence of Ireland might be preserved, without acceding to the *extent* of Catholic emancipation. The apology of the Catholics, in 1800, for not opposing the Union, as a body, was, that as they were not fully admitted into the enjoyment of the constitution, it was unimportant to them to preserve it's independence.

† A biographical history of the Earl of Charlemont has lately appeared, from the pen of Mr. Francis Hardy, an honest and respectable member of the late Irish Parliament, whose fidelity to his principles, and the neglect of whose merits, have been equally conspicuous. Mr. Hardy had a personal intimacy and connection with his Lordship, and access to his papers. That history, though diffuse as to Earl Charlemont, and inaccurate in depicting some other characters, contains much authentic private anecdote, and does great credit both to the selection and friendships of Mr. Hardy.

The British Government at length awakened from their slumbers—their dreams of power and security now vanished before the view of their increasing dangers;—a reliance on the omnipotence of English arms—at all times chimerical—would now have been presumptuous;—the Irish nation, to whose bravery and whose blood the victories and conquests of England had been so considerably indebted, now called imperiously for their own rights, and demanded a full participation of that constitution, in support of which they daily sacrificed so great a proportion of their treasure and their population.

The Irish soldier and the Irish seaman could never be supposed to remain unfeeling spectators, whilst their own country was struggling for its dearest liberties, or become the mercenary instruments of their own subjugation. Circumstanced as England then was, even their indisposition to the British service would have reduced the armies and navy to debility; but their defections would have been fatal to the power of Great Britain, and have enabled Ireland irresistibly to proclaim and to effect her total independence. The balance of Europe was likely to undergo a great change;—the improvident attachment to continental politics—since so fatal to the liberties of Europe and her own prosperity—almost exclusively engrossed the attention of England; and the completion of a mercenary league with a petty potentate of the Germanic body, was considered of more importance by the

British Cabinet, than all the miseries, the dangers, and the oppressions of Ireland. But the British Government now perceived their error, when it was too late to temporize—and that arrogance, which, for centuries, had hardly condescended to hear her groans, was now terrified into attention—and, under the pretence and semblance of voluntary concession, the British Legislature affected to recognize the demands of Ireland—a fact, only originating from her inability to resist them.

The affairs of Ireland now approached fast towards a crisis; the freedom of commerce being the subject most familiar and comprehensible to the ideas of the people, was now the first object of their solicitude.—“A free Trade” became the watchword of the Volunteers, and the cry of the Nation;—the Dublin Volunteer Artillery appeared on parade, commanded by James Napper Tandy, with labels on the mouths of their cannon—“A free Trade or speedy Revolution;”—placards were pasted up in every part of the city, to the same effect, until the determined proceedings of all ranks and classes of the people, connected with the operation of the non-importation agreements, left no further room for ministerial procrastination.

The British Minister now became alarmed, and began to tremble for the consequences of his political intolerance;—he had no passage to retreat by—and after every struggle which circumstances could at all admit of, the British Cabinet at length came to a

resolution, that "something must be done to tranquilize Ireland." The King was informed of their determination, and was prevailed upon to adopt the same opinion. His Majesty had received a severe shock, by the unexpected events of the American contest—and the additional mortification of compulsory concessions to Ireland, was little calculated to tranquilize his feelings; however, absolute necessity required his acquiescence; and it was finally determined, by the executive Power of Great Britain, to adopt means, if not altogether to satisfy, at least to conciliate and to concede considerably to Ireland.

From this determination, the aspect of affairs in the British Empire began to wear altogether a new aspect;—the day was fast approaching when England, for the first time, must condescend to acknowledge her own errors, and, in the face of Europe, to humble herself before a people, who had, for six centuries, been the slaves of her power rather than the subjects of her affection.

Lord North had now a more difficult task to perform than he at first conceived—to recant his avowed principles—to humble the pride of his own country, and submit to the justice of another—and above all, to justify his own conduct, which had reduced both countries to that state which required those concessions:—an awful lesson to all Governments, how cautiously they should arrogate to themselves a dominion, of which the basis was power and the superstructure injustice.

The plausibility and talents of the Minister, however, steered him through this intricate channel with admirable ingenuity ;— he took a bold step at once, and after having, the former session, neglected the representatives of Parliament, and been deaf to the remonstrances of Ireland, he abruptly put into the mouth of his Sovereign a speech, intended to flatter and gratify Ireland with superficial expressions of praise, attachment, and confidence— but at the same time calculated to pacify England for this ungracious liberality ; the plainest inference could be deduced from the construction of the speech, that it was the kindness of compulsion and the candour of insincerity.

On the 24th of November, ¹⁷⁷⁹~~1799~~, his Majesty ascended the throne, to proclaim his first substantial act of grace to the Irish nation—and to call the immediate attention of his British Parliament to the situation of that country*—but his Majesty obviously

* That clause of his Majesty's speech from the throne, which related to Ireland, ran as follows :

“ In the midst of my care and solicitude for the *safety* and welfare of *THIS* country, I
 “ have not been inattentive to the state of my *loyal* and *faithful* kingdom of Ireland. I
 “ have (in consequence of your addresses, presented to me in the *last* session) ordered
 “ such papers to be collected and laid before you, as may assist your deliberations
 “ on this important business ; and I recommend it to you to consider what *FURTHER*
 “ benefits and advantages may be *extended* to that kingdom, by such regulations and such

insinuated, that his attention to Ireland was attracted by a consideration for the safety of Great Britain—and that the benefits to

“ *methods* as may most effectually promote the COMMON strength, wealth, and interest of
“ ALL my dominions.”

This speech, and the answer of the Lords, forms a fine contrast to the address of that House to King William, in 1697. (See page 99.) The former exemplifies the arrogance and tyranny of a *conquering* power—and the latter the fears and duplicity of a *tottering* one.

The reply of the House of Lords to his Majesty's speech, expresses—“ the sense they
“ have of his Majes^y's paternal goodness, which does not *confine* itself to *one* part of his
“ dominions, but is anxious for the prosperity of the *whole*—and in the midst of his care
“ and solicitude for the *safety* and welfare of THIS country, had led his attention to the
“ state of his *loyal* and *faithful* kingdom of Ireland—and they assure his Majesty, that,
“ guided by the *same* sentiments, they will consider what FURTHER benefits may be
“ extended to that kingdom.”

This address was quickly followed up by resolutions—giving the *lie* direct to King William, and to the assertions of their own ancestors—and by passing bills, distinctly repealing all the acts which their predecessors had declared absolutely *essential* to secure the *prosperity* of England from the *dangerous industry* of the Irish.

The resolutions proposed by Lord North, were to the following purport :

“ That it is now EXPEDIENT to *repeal* all acts prohibiting the exportation from Ireland of all woollen manufactures whatsoever—or of mixed wool and cotton—or of glass bottles.

“ To allow a free trade between Ireland and the *British* colonies in *America*—in the West Indies, and the settlements on the coast of Africa.—Also to become members of the Turkey Company—and for liberty to import foreign hops into Ireland.”

be extended to Ireland should be only such as would be for the common interest, not of Ireland abstractedly, but of *all* his dominions—and by that very act of conceding to Ireland, he virtually asserted the supremacy of the British Parliament.

This speech was immediately attended to by the British Parliament;—the Opposition received it as a triumph over the Minister, and gladly acceded to a declaration which humiliated their opponents, and proclaimed the imbecility and misconduct of the Cabinet;—the Ministerialists, on the other side, followed the instruction of his Majesty with equal satisfaction. An actual insurrection in Ireland—the certain consequence of further inattention—would have certainly deprived the Minister of his station, and perhaps eventually of his head;—concession to Ireland, therefore, was the surest mode of continuing him in his office, and consequently prolonging their own power and patronage.

A singular coincidence of events thus united two hostile interests in one honest object; and Ireland was destined to receive, from the corruption of one party, and the ill temper of another, those rights which she had so long and so frequently solicited in vain from the justice of both of them.

These were the famous resolutions with which the British Cabinet intended to pacify Ireland; but which, as they were the work of necessity, so they were never intended to remain unqualified longer than the continuance of the necessity which induced them. This became manifest a few years afterwards, on the discussion of the Commercial Propositions.

The speech was immediately followed by the measures recommended by his Majesty—and the same Parliament which had so repeatedly withheld the just rights of Ireland, now thought they could not too hastily accede to her claims; and hardly a day was omitted, till the arrangement was proceeded on, and finally completed.*

The British Parliament now proceeded to pass various resolutions, declaring that it was “expedient” forthwith to repeal the several statutes and laws of Great Britain, which restrained the commerce and manufacture of Ireland, and in that respect partially to place her on a level with British subjects.

* The British Parliament met the 25th of November, and the first bills of concession received the Royal assent the 21st December. The Earl (now Marquis) of Drogheda was the chairman of the Committee on those bills;—he afterwards became a strong supporter of the Union;—and if we consider the Gentlemen who brought in these first concessions in favour of Ireland, and compare it with the former conduct of many of them, it will give us a curious lesson on legislative inconsistency. The persons who brought in these bills, were,

Lords North,
Drogheda,
George Germain,
Beauchamp,
Westeote,
Palmerston,
Nugent,
Newnham,

Attorney General,
Solicitor General,
Mr. Cornwall,
Mr. Charles Townsend,
Mr. Ellis,
Sir Grey Cowper,
Mr. Robinson.

Bills, in conformity to these resolutions, were immediately brought in; and so much expedition was now thought necessary, by the friends of Government, that the first bill of concession received the Royal assent the same month, and the others were put into a state of immediate progress. Messages were sent over to Ireland, to announce the happy tidings to the people—and emissaries were dispersed over every part of the kingdom, to blazon the liberality and justice of Great Britain.

The Minister, however, justly suspecting, that so soon as the paroxysms of Irish gratitude, for this unaccustomed condescension, should subside, and give way to more calm reflection, that nation could not avoid perceiving, that until their constitution became independent, and the usurpation of England should be altogether extinguished, these favours could have no stability, and might be revoked, at a more favorable opportunity, by the same authority which originally conceded them.

To obviate these feelings, and, if possible, to keep alive the expectation of that inconsiderate and sanguine people, the Minister only dealt out his favor gradually, and continued the Committee on Irish affairs open from time to time, now and then passing a resolution in favor of that country, and thus endeavouring to wear out the session, which he, no doubt, intended should terminate these concessions.

This had, in some measure, the desired effect—and he had the satisfaction of perceiving something like a difference of opinion manifesting itself amongst the most respectable and faithful friends of the Irish nation ;—those who dreaded convulsion more than they loved liberty, ventured to declare their satisfaction at the auspicious dawn of their freedom, and an implicit confidence in the future views and liberality of England, whilst others, though more ardent, yet more just in the view of the subject, calculated future events by past experience, and saw no just reason to place future confidence in a Government, whose want of justice and liberality they had so much reason to complain of.

The whole Nation at length perceived the duplicity of those laws, which, while they purported to extend benefits to Ireland, asserted the paramount authority of Great Britain—and converted it's acts of concession into declaratory statutes of it's own supremacy.

It was justly argued, that if Ireland really possessed an independent Legislature, the right of exporting woollens and glass, and of importing hops—so ostentatiously granted as boons by the British Parliament—were, in fact, only local concerns, which the Irish Parliament, and not that of Great Britain, was adapted to discuss, and competent to regulate ;—and even the grant of a free trade to the British colonies, though undoubtedly a favour, so far as it operated, would lose nine-tenths of it's value by the inde-

pendence of America;—and the statutes by which that right was granted, were, at all events, so interwoven with inferences of British authority over the affairs of Ireland, that the whole appeared a tissue of insidious policy.

Reasoning of this nature soon made a deep impression on the public mind—and meetings were held throughout the kingdom, to declare the national feeling on this important subject;—fourteen counties avowed their determination to tear down these barriers which excluded them from a full participation of the British constitution, and to establish, at the risque of their lives and fortunes, the independence of the Irish Legislature, beyond the power of British re-assumption.*

* As the genius and disposition of a people are often discoverable, not only by trivial but ludicrous circumstances, so their national poetry and music have a very considerable effect in raising the spirit, and disclosing the character, of the Irish. At this period the press teemed with publications of every quality, in prose and verse, on the subject of commercial liberty; all of which had their effect, in keeping up the spirit of the people.—A stanza from one of those popular songs of that day, shows the pointed humour and whimsical lightness which characterize all the poetical productions of the Irish, even upon the most important subjects.

In alluding to the Irish being deprived of the woollen trade by England—and the military associations of Ireland to assert her liberties—the stanza runs thus :

“ Was she not a fool,
 “ When she took off the *wool*,
 “ To leave us so much of the
 leather, the leather ?

This spirit and this determination spread themselves universally amongst the people;—the cry of “Free Trade” was now accompanied with that of “Free Parliament,”—and that patriotic enthusiasm which had so effectually asserted the commerce of Ireland, now arose with double vigour to assert its constitution.

The Volunteer army, in the mean time, rapidly advanced in discipline and numbers:—the success which had attended this first effort of their steadiness, acted as a powerful incitement to the continuation of their exertion; they felt, with exultation, that at the very time they were in arms, without the authority of the Crown, or control of their Sovereign, his Majesty, from his throne, condescended to pass unqualified eulogiums on the loyalty and fidelity of the people—expressions, which, if considered with reference to the King, were gracious—but with reference to the Government, which framed them, were clearly the result rather of intimidation than confidence, and intended as an anodyne to lull that spirit which durst not be encountered.

Provincial reviews of the Volunteer armies were now adopted, and a more regular staff appointed to the general Officers;—new

“ It ne’er entered her pate,
“ That a *sheep’s skin*, well beat,
“ Would draw a whole nation
together, together.”

These words were adapted to a popular air, and became a favorite march of the Volunteers, and a patriotic song amongst the peasantry throughout the kingdom.

trains of artillery were formed—that of Belfast was brought to considerable perfection. Earl Charlemont was called on to review the Northern army; on his tour he was attended by many persons of the highest distinction, and his suit had all the appearance of military dignity and national importance. His Lordship returned to review the Leinster corps in Dublin. His aid-de-camps were men of the highest character and of the first ability. — Barry Yelverton, Hussey Burgh, (both of whom were afterwards Chief Barons of the Exchequer) and Mr. Grattan, were on his staff.

The Volunteer army had acquired the true character of an efficient force, and was at that period supposed to amount to above fifty thousand soldiers, ready for actual service—aided by the zeal, the prayers, and the co-operation of five millions of unarmed inhabitants.

The British Government, which had vainly supposed that enough had been done, if not to satisfy, at least to disunite the Irish people, now perceived how ill they had calculated on the character of that nation, and beheld, with pain and disappointment, the futility of their designs, and the feebleness of their authority.

The dilemma of the Minister was difficult and distressing;—every effort to seduce the Volunteers from their allegiance to their country, had failed—any attempt to dupe them would have been futile, and to resist them would be impossible :—distracted, there-

fore, by every species of embarrassment, he suffered the Irish nation to pursue it's course without direct opposition, and trusted to the chance of events for the preservation of the Empire.

The rapid succession of spirited and peremptory resolutions, entered into by the country, however, reluctantly convinced him, that he must eventually accede to every measure which the Irish people should determine to insist upon, and that his best hopes must necessarily depend on the possibility of their moderation.

A variety of circumstances, heretofore unnoticed, now opened to the public view, and concurred to put the constitutional claims of Ireland directly in issue with the British Legislature.

The standing army in Ireland had before been under the regulations of a British statute; and the hereditary revenue of the Crown, with the aid of a perpetual mutiny bill, enabled the British Government to command at all times a standing army in Ireland, without the authority or the control of it's Parliament.

This unconstitutional power, hitherto almost unnoticed in Ireland, now that the principles of liberty had been disseminated amongst the people, and that an army of Irishmen had been organized and tolerated for it's protection, became a subject of well-founded jealousy and general dissatisfaction.—Some patriotic Magistrates determined to make a stand upon that point, and to bring the legality of British statutes, as operating in Ireland, into issue, through the medium of their own conduct, in refusing to obey them.

To effect this measure, they determined to resist the authority of the British mutiny act, and by refusing to billet soldiers, under the provisions of that statute, solicited complaints against themselves, for the purpose of trying the question.

This most alarming measure would at once have put the constitution of Ireland and the usurpation of Great Britain in direct issue in the municipal courts of the former country;—but the Irish Judges were then totally dependant upon Government;—they held their offices during the pleasure of the Crown only;—Judges might differ with the Juries—the People with both;—and the result of a trial of such a question, in such a way, was considered by all parties as too precarious, to hazard the experiment. Government, on the other hand, to allay the public feeling, and palliate the evil, proposed to substitute an Irish mutiny bill for that of England, but with the same provisions of duration, and bestowing the same extent of authority to the Government.—After many angry debates in the Irish Parliament, during the progress and discussion of which, the Government continued to divide some of the best friends of Ireland,* and after many divisions, a

* Mr. Dennis Daly, member for Galway, a particular friend of Mr. Grattan's, and closely connected with the Opposition party, on this question, seceded from his friends, and some time afterwards accepted the office of Muster-master General. His defection was much regretted, as he was a gentleman of the highest character, and a man of peculiar talent and extraordinary eloquence.

temporary mutiny bill was rejected; and about the latter end of the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine, the Irish Legislature passed a perpetual mutiny bill; thereby giving a permanent power to the English Government over the Irish army.

At this time, some Volunteer corps published resolutions of a very inflammatory tendency. Parliament became alarmed; and resolutions were passed in the House of Commons, censuring the publishers; but all this only promoted the irritation it was intended to allay;—the career of independence proceeded with irresistible impetuosity, and every thing concurred to excite a general feeling that a crisis was fast approaching, when the true principles of the constitution of Ireland must be decisively determined.

This moment was certainly most critical.—The standing army, without looking to the true grounds on which the nation acted, supposed that a refusal to acknowledge the authority under which they had been imbodyed, was somewhat derogatory to their institution; and though the regular forces and the volunteer army had been theretofore on the most amicable terms, they could not be altogether so indifferent to this circumstance, but that jealousies might probably be excited, which might eventually be widened into a breach, pregnant with the most disastrous consequences.—This was an extremity the Viceroy wisely determined to avoid; and orders were issued to the army, to show every possible mark of respect to the Volunteers; their officers received the usual military

salute from the regular soldiers, and a regiment of cavalry was ordered by the Lord Lieutenant to assist in keeping the Volunteer lines at a review in the Phoenix Park. But an accidental circumstance, of an unpleasant nature, some time afterwards occurred, which showed the necessity of cultivating that cordiality, on the continuation of which, the tranquility of the nation so entirely depended.

Lieutenant Doyne, of the second regiment of Horse, marching to relieve the guards in Dublin Castle, at the head of the cavalry, came accidentally, on Essex Bridge, directly at right angles with a line of Volunteer infantry, commanded by Lord Altamont, (late Marquis of Sligo). An instant embarrassment took place—one party must halt, or the other could not pass—neither would recede—etiquette seemed likely to get the better of prudence—the cavalry advanced—the Volunteers continued their progress, till they were nearly in contact—never did a more critical moment exist in Ireland.—Had one drop of blood been shed, through the impetuosity of either officer, even in that silly question of precedence, the Irish Volunteers would have beat to arms, from north to south, in every part of the kingdom—and British connection would certainly have been shaken to it's very foundation.

As the cavalry advanced, Lord Altamont commanded his corps to continue their march, and incline their bayonets, so as to be ready to defend their line.—The cavalry officer, wisely

reflecting, that by the pause even of a single moment, every possibility of disagreement would be obviated, halted his men for an instant—the Volunteers passed on—and the affair ended without further difficulty.*

This circumstance, however trivial, was quickly circulated, and, combined with many others, still increased the public clamour.—Resolutions were entered into by almost every military corps, and every corporate body, that they would no longer obey any laws, save those enacted by the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland; and this spirit gradually embraced the whole population, till at length it ended in the celebrated resolutions of Dungannon, which first established the independence of Ireland.

At this period occurred a signal instance of the vicissitudes of popularity—an acquirement fleeting as the winds, and unsteady as the compass.—Popular applause, often gained without merit, is often lost without error;—as it is the food of vanity, so it becomes the grave of character:—the character of public men is generally viewed through a fallacious medium—and that which is acquired

* Lieutenant Doyne, as soon as he was off duty, sent a message to Lord Altamont, of a hostile nature, and with the view of making the matter a personal subject between them. This, however, was wisely prevented, by the interference of friends, and no inconvenience resulted from the business.

by the exertion of their patriotism, is not unfrequently lost by the exercise of their moderation.

James Duke of Leinster, the favourite and the patron of the Irish people, whose private and public characters kept so equal a pace with each other, as to leave it difficult to determine which was the most meritorious, now began to lose ground in the public estimation ;—his language began to be misconstrued—his principles suspected—and his discretion condemned.

From perhaps a timid view of the agitated state of his country, he wished rather to conciliate than enflame a people, already too much inclined to the paroxysms of impetuosity ; and in adopting a system of moderation, which might check the progress of hostile feelings between the two nations, he, with an honest openness, which ever formed a prominent feature of his character, used expressions, in the House of Lords, which conveyed his opinion, that Ireland should be, at least for the present, content with the concessions of Great Britain, and await with patience for the progress of her liberality.

Whether this was the genuine opinion of his Grace, or whether it was the result of a discreet feeling, or a timorous policy, was immaterial—it's consequences to him were the same. This principle was quite uncongenial to the general feeling of the people—the weight of his influence instantly lightened—his popularity declined—a single expression was converted into a thousand

errors, and it was a considerable time before his Grace was thoroughly restored to his well-founded authority amongst the Irish people.

Never did the physiologist enjoy a more fortunate elucidation of his science, than in his Grace the Duke of Leinster:—the softness of philanthropy—the placidity of temper—the openness of sincerity—the sympathy of friendship—and the ease of integrity—stamped corresponding impressions on his artless countenance, and left but little to conjecture, as to the composition of his character.

Generally respected as a public man, and universally beloved as a private one, he was surrounded by as few enemies as the nature of society, and the hostility of corrupt and feeble governments, could be supposed to admit of.

His elevated rank and extensive connections gave him a paramount lead in Irish politics, which his naked talents would not otherwise have justified ;—though his capacity was respectable, it was not brilliant, and his abilities were not adapted to the very highest class of political pre-eminence.* On public subjects, his conduct sometimes wanted energy, and his pursuits perseverance ; in some points he might have been weak, and in some instances

* The political abilities of his Grace were likened, by a Gentleman of great public talent, to “a fair fertile field, without either a *weed* or a *wild* flower in it.”

he might have been erroneous—but in all he was honest ;—from the day of his maturity to the moment of his dissolution, he was the undeviating friend of the Irish Nation—he considered it's interests and his own indissolubly connected—alive to the oppressions and miseries of the people, his feeling heart participated in their misfortunes, and felt the smart of every blow which the scourge of power inflicted on his country.*—As a soldier, and as a patriot, he performed his duties ; and in his plain and honorable disposition, was found collected a happy specimen of those qualities which best compose the character of a Gentleman.

He took an early and active part in promoting the formation of the Volunteer associations—he raised many, and commanded more ;—the ancient celebrity of his family—the vast extent of his possessions—and his affability in private intercourse, co-operated with his own popularity in extending his influence—and few persons ever enjoyed a more general and merited authority amongst the Irish people.

* The Duke of Leinster invariably opposed the tyrannical and irritating proclamations and measures of Lord Clare, and consequently was not summoned to the Privy Council, when violent methods were intended to be adopted.—The names of the personages who signed those proclamations, and proposed those measures, appear on record, as a perpetual memorial of the errors and impolicy of their government.

In later days, when the minds of men became totally divested of their original impressions;—when no human foresight could venture at one moment rationally to conjecture the events of the ensuing—and even speculation had lost all it's character, by the continual fallibility of it's predictions—moderation and wisdom seemed altogether to have abandoned Europe—and anarchy to have usurped the throne of absent reason—it was not wonderful, that, at such an epocha, every new tenet of political doctrine was acted upon, with all the wildness of intemperate novelty, and that partisans were driven into the very opposite extremes of the most extravagant theories.— Though some members of his Grace's family, at that distracting period, shared in the general errors of humanity, and diverged in opposite directions from their common centre,* in one thousand seven hundred and eighty their principles were congenial; and the family of the Geraldins were equally admired for the sincerity of their patriotism and unanimity.

* Lord Charles Fitzgerald (in opposition to the Duke) supported the Union, and was created a Peer—Lord Edward, (one of the most amiable of the family) on the other hand, was unfortunately led away into a still more ruinous direction; and the other brothers of his Grace became total absentees.—The Duke alone remained at his post, as the zealous friend of Ireland, to the last hour of his life.

The Irish Catholics, at this period, pursued a conduct so meritorious, that even the bitterest enemies of that sect acknowledged the uncommon merit of their conduct ;—their open friends multiplied—their secret enemies diminished—and they gradually worked themselves into the favor and confidence of their Protestant countrymen—though loaded with severe restrictions—though put out of the pale of the British constitution—and groaning under the most cruel and unjust oppression—they were active and patriotic—they forgot the tyranny under which they groaned—and only felt the chains which fettered and oppressed their country ;—a general union of all sects seemed to be cemented—the animosity of ages seemed to have been buried in oblivion—and it was reserved for the incendiaries of a later period to revive that barbarous sectarial discord—a weapon, without which the British Government would have found Ireland still too pure for the influence of power, and too strong for the grasp of annexation.

A person, who afterwards made a considerable figure in the local affairs of Ireland, raised himself, about this time, into considerable notoriety, by his patriotic exertions. James Napper Tandy, a gentleman in the middle station of life, without talent or natural influence, had become a warm advocate in the corporation of Dublin ;—he debated zealously in public—he argued strenuously in private—and persevered in both with indefatigable

ardor. His person was ungracious—his language neither eloquent nor argumentative—his address neither graceful nor impressive—but he was sincere and persevering—and though in many instances erroneous and violent, he was considered to be honest. His private character furnished no ground to doubt the integrity of his public one—and, like many of those persons who occasionally spring up in revolutionary periods, he acquired celebrity, without being able to account for it—and possessed influence, without rank or capacity.*

The doctrines of democracy, to which he afterwards became a victim, had at this period no existence amongst the Irish people ; as the germe of a system of government, sowed in America, had not then sufficiently advanced in maturity, to shed it's seeds in

* In 1796, Mr. Tandy lost all his popularity, and nearly his life, by his apparent want of courage in an affair between him and Mr. Toler, then Solicitor General, now Lord Norbury and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

Mr. Tandy having signified to Mr. Toler his desire to fight him, the Chief Justice readily accepted the offer. Both parties manœuvred very skilfully ; but Mr. Tandy delaying his ultimatum too long for the impatience of the Solicitor General, he brought him before the House of Commons, for a breach of privilege, and prosecuted him for sedition. Mr. Tandy escaped to the Continent—entered the French service—invaded Ireland—was arrested by the British Envoy at Hamburgh, contrary to the law of nations—was brought to Ireland, and condemned to be hanged—was pardoned by Lord Cornwallis, and sent back to France, where he died a French General !

other countries—it was then but a weak exotic, to which the heat of civil war alone had given the principle of vegetation.—In Ireland, it was uncongenial to the minds, and unadapted to the character, of the people; and during the whole progress of those events, which preceded the attainment of Irish independence, its progress was only observable in the intimate association of the distant ranks in military bodies—and the idea of revolution never extended further, than to attain the undisturbed enjoyment of the British constitution, and to remove for ever the ascendancy of the British Government over the Crown of Ireland.

CHAP. V.

Defects of the Irish Constitution recapitulated.—That of England practically a Deviation from it's theoretical Principles.—The Operation of it's Abuses, so far as they regarded Ireland.—Earl O'Neill.—His Character.—Proposes an Address of Thanks to the armed Volunteers.—Opposed by Lord Clare.—Supported by the Attorney General.—Observations on the moral and physical Strength of Ireland in 1782.—Intrigues of the British Government to suspend the Operation of the free Trade.—Portugal refuses to receive Irish Manufactures.—Creates great Dissatisfaction in Ireland, and gives Rise to new constitutional Questions.—The Necessity of further Measures, by the Irish, to obtain constitutional Independence.—General Resolutions of the Irish People.—Alarm and Embarrassment of the British Government.—Barry Yelverton, (afterwards Lord Avonmore) a distinguished Member of the Irish Parliament.—His Character, and peculiar Eloquence.

NOTWITHSTANDING all these occurrences, the British nation still remained obstinately blind to the true state of Ireland.—The people of that country enjoyed the blessings of independent justice—personal liberty—and commercial freedom, under the protection of a resident Monarch and an unfettered Parliament—they were interested only in their own aggrandizement—their solicitude extended only to their own concerns—and without reflecting that the same advantages which they so liberally possessed, were denied to Ireland, they attributed the uneasiness of

that nation rather to innate principles of disaffection, than the natural result of misery and oppression.—Little did the English people really understand the lamentable state of insecurity to which not only the personal liberty of the Irish subject, but even the administration of justice, in all its departments, had been reduced, by the arbitrary laws of Irish rulers, and the ruinous defects of a decrepit constitution—nor did they comprehend that there was not a nation under Heaven, which at that time groaned under a state of more abject slavery, than Ireland.—Ministerial power had become paramount to freedom—and she had to depend only upon the moderation of the Viceroy, for even the semblance of liberty.

The proud structure of a free constitution had been altogether rased, even to its foundation, by the rough hand of a foreign Legislature—enacting laws, to which the representatives of the Irish people were utter strangers. Yet, this usurpation had been sanctioned by the dictum of a British Judge, who added to his reputation, by giving an unqualified opinion for Irish slavery;*—and it was singularly remarkable, that though the Irish representatives were not even consulted, as to the enactment

* Mr. Justice Blackstone, whose Commentaries gained him high reputation, as an English lawyer, seems to have had his views contracted and narrowed by abstruse details and technical ambiguity, and to have been altogether unfitted to move on the broad sphere of constitutional polity.

of British statutes coercing Ireland, yet they were prohibited from even originating laws to regulate their own local concerns—the most important attribute of a free people.

In furtherance of this system of arbitrary power, a despotic authority also vested in the King of Great Britain—not as King of Ireland—by a British statute, which gave to the British Government a perpetual and uncontrolable dominion over the standing army on the Irish establishment—and thereby established in Ireland a precedent, utterly inconsistent with the prerogative of a limited monarchy, and which would not have been endured one moment in Great Britain.*

It is painful to see a British Judge—whose duty it was at least to respect the vital principles of that constitution under which he acted—giving a decisive opinion for the legality of “legislation without representatives,”—and, in the case of Ireland, condemning that centinel, by whose vigilance alone the property, the liberty, and the lives of Englishmen are protected.

His zeal to support this arbitrary principle over Ireland, led him to forget it's operation as to the rest of the world, and on these points entitled him rather to the character of a blind partisan, than a constitutional lawyer.

By the Revocation-act of 1782, the British Legislature admitted the error of his position; and the concessions proffered to America by the British Government, gave a death-blow to the tyrannical doctrine. Yet Judge Blackstone was quoted as a constitutional authority in the British and Irish Parliament on the question of Union.

* When King William the Third had subdued Ireland, and expelled his father-in-law from that country, he endeavoured to retain a few of his countrymen (the Dutch body

Even the personal liberty of the subject, upon which the foundation of all civil security is radically founded in Ireland, depended solely upon the legal discretion and moral honesty of municipal Judges;—but the exercise of that discretion and that honesty might subject those Judges to the arbitrary punishment, and consequently to the influence, of the Irish Viceroy—another grievance, which the British people would rather perish than submit to.

The salaries of the Judges of Ireland were then barely sufficient to keep them above want—and they held their offices only during the will of the British Minister—who might remove them at his pleasure;—all Irish justice, therefore, was at his control.—In all questions between the Crown and the People, the purity of the Judge was consequently suspected;—if he

guards) about his person in England—the nation caught fire at the idea of even a standing regiment of foreigners, and he was obliged to relinquish them.

The American war, followed by the French revolution, from various causes, got the better of this precaution, and induced England to entertain in the British service people of every nation in the world—whether friends or enemies—who chose to fight for pay;—but being under the control of Parliament, are therefore safe, unless the Parliament should, by any mischance, *hereafter*, fall under the control of the *Minister*—in which case, the consequences might be incalculable. But this could have been no apology for a standing army in Ireland, totally independent of it's Parliament, and forming a precedent in that country, which, if followed in England, might annihilate it's constitution.

could not be corrupted, he might be cashiered—the dignity of his office was lost in his dependance—and he was reduced to the sad alternative of poverty or dishonor; nor was this grievance lessened, by many of the Judges being sent over from England, prejudiced against the Irish, and unacquainted with their customs.

The Irish Parliament, at this period, met but once in two years, and in the British Attorney General was vested the superintendence of their proceedings—and the British Privy Council the alteration and rejection of their statutes.

Ireland had no navy to protect her feeble commerce—and it's declination, or ruin, was at least a matter of indifference, if not of triumph, to the British monopolists.

These grievances—in themselves almost intolerable—were greatly aggravated by the abuses which had been creeping into the executive and legislative department of the British Government.—England, long engaged in perpetual struggles between despotism and liberty, had been suffering under the excesses of both, and boasting of alternate triumphs over her Crown and over her People. All the base passions and prejudices of man had been roused and exercised in these ruinous commotions—loyalty and treason—tyranny and freedom—monarchy and usurpation—occupied almost every page in the annals of that country;—and the restoration of Charles to the honors of his murdered brother, was

only as a precursor to the final and fatal expulsion of his dynasty.

The revolution of one thousand six hundred and ninety, which arose out of this struggle for constitution, was accomplished in England, through the timidity of an arbitrary Prince, and the ambition of ungrateful children—and, in a paroxysm of parliamentary disorder, was sanctioned, under the plausible name of royal abdication. But this flight of James had no such character to colour it in Ireland;—that Monarch did not extend abdication to his Irish dominions—he fled from England, to avoid the catastrophe of his father, and threw himself for protection upon the loyalty of his Irish subjects;—nor did he misplace that confidence—his crimes had not extended to their country—they fought, and they fell, in the cause of their allegiance—the lives and the fortunes of the Irish gentry became sacrifices to his rights,—the rebel and the loyalist transposed their characters, and William sealed the revolution of Great Britain with the blood of the Irish nation.

However, though the enormities committed in Ireland during this revolutionary contest—though the expulsion of the bravest of it's inhabitants—the breach of Royal faith*—the sanguinary code

* The violation of the articles of Limerick has ever been considered, in Ireland, as a most grievous infraction of Royal faith. The emigration of between thirty and forty

of penal statutes, enacted by the conqueror—may have altogether tarnished the liberality and condemned the policy of William—yet the consequences of that revolution formed the finest features of the British constitution—gave to it's infant form the vigour of maturity, and endowed it with those wise and salutary maxims, which raises it so high above that of other nations—but from which the vicious system of successive Ministers afterwards caused so many and injurious deviations ;—the measures of every Cabinet widened the distinction between the theory and the practice of that dearly-purchased constitution—and every deviation from it's principles was sure to depart further from the interests of the people.

By the theory of that constitution, the British Minister is only to be considered as a legal hostage from the supremacy of King to the liberties of People—to guarantee the boundaries of the commands of his Sovereign's magisterial prerogative—to supply the absence of Royal responsibility. But practically, the Ministers had been soaring above the throne of their master—clipping the edges of the constitution, and anticipating indemnity, through the magnitude of their patronage—holding the King and

thousand Irish, was the consequences of the conduct of King William and his government; and the defeat of the British arms, in many important affairs upon the Continent, was achieved by those very Irishmen, whom the intolerance and bad policy of England had driven for bread into the service of our enemies.

the people at arm's length from each other, lest the closeness of such connection might enfeeble their authority—upholding their own interest, by assiduously endeavouring to separate that of the Monarch from his subjects;—though an indivisible union and complete identity of interest between the King and his people, should form the fundamental principle and peculiar character of a limited monarchy.

This vicious practice, the bitterest enemy of British liberty had been gradually advancing against the boundaries of the constitution—and first, under pretence of supporting it's supremacy over America, and next, under colour of defending it against the contagion of French principles, have been established precedents in Great Britain, little less despotic than the worst measures of it's enemies.

The people, perpetually dupes to their own ignorance, were easily misled, both as to the true theory of their constitution, and the practical errors of their government;—the Minister formed speeches for his King, and developed his own measures through the mouth of his Majesty;—the wholesome power of the Prince was absorbed in the influence of his Ministers—an oligarchy, mounted high on the steps of the throne, intercepted the remonstrances of the people—the imprudent measures of the Administration were imputed to the obstinacy of the Crown—and responsibility was transferred from the head of the Minister to the character of the Monarch.

That which gives the complexion of an oligarchy to the British Government, is the Cabinet—a department useful to the secret movements of the executive—but abstractedly forming no fundamental part of the constitution.

This secret Committee of the Privy Council being selected by the Minister of the day, from those whom his victories over the Opposition, and consequent influence over the Crown, have enabled him to nominate to the principal offices of the State, are, at his pleasure, modelled into the form of a party Administration;—they, therefore, find it advantageous to consolidate their interests with that of the Minister, and to render the Cabinet, as much as possible, the exclusive line of communication between the King and the People.*

The collective wisdom of his Majesty's Privy Council is, therefore, never resorted to;—the Cabinet exercises the powers of Government in all its branches—and the subsequent concurrence, rather than the previous approbation, of the Sovereign, is generally applied for:—all political projects originate—all public

* The modern transaction relative to the petition of the city of London, which the Cabinet would not permit his Majesty to receive, except through an official department, is sufficiently illustrative of this observation; and, under all its circumstances, not very advantageous to the general character of the present Administration.

measures are put in motion—and the application of all public moneys is directed by that body—which, by possessing the ear of the Sovereign, and the patronage of the Empire, acquired an influence over a majority of the legislative bodies, so extensive, that, in many instances, British Ministers have appeared to set responsibility at defiance.*

This department, familiarly called the Cabinet, generally continues in power, until it's opponents, taking advantage of it's internal jealousies, or too palpable misconduct, make a successful struggle to substitute themselves; and a new Administration and Cabinet is then formed for his Majesty, composed of the most violent opponents of the last, who, at the commencement of their authority, boldly inveigh against, but ultimately slide into, the measures of their predecessors.

* A British Minister disclaiming responsibility, is not a *direct* negative to convicted culpability. But the rejection of motions for *Inquiry*, and for the Production of *Papers*, which might warrant and promote inquiry—and the power of suppressing or garbling despatches and public papers, under the assertion of the Minister that their production might be *advantageous to the enemy*, all prove the *facility of evading* responsibility—as the assertions of the Minister, on these heads, may be perfectly true or totally false; and, under the present circumstances, he must be allowed to judge. This could easily be remedied by a secret and narrow Committee; and if the Minister was certain that such Committees might always be resorted to, he would, on these occasions, be careful to give a correct representation.

The British Administration thus almost imperceptibly acquire much of the character of an oligarchical Government;—the balancing powers lose their equilibrium, and the practice diverges widely from the theory of the constitution.

To render, therefore, the Government more pure—the Monarch more independent—the people more contented—and to bring back the constitution to original principles—a reform of the Commons House of Parliament has been strenuously recommended;—a measure, which, it's advocates assert, would, by diminishing the weight of the intervening oligarchy, bring the King and the People into a closer approximation—restore the natural aristocracy to it's constitutional influence—rescue the landed interest from the unnatural ascendancy of the commercial influence—and raise such of the country Gentlemen as had been spared from the Peerage, to their proper weight and importance in the Commons—and finally restore to the Senate the advantages of talent and of eloquence—qualities so valuable to the preservation of liberty, but which are now merged in the official apathy and unlettered dulness of purchased representation.

On the other hand, this reasoning has been plausibly replied to by the opponents of parliamentary reform; who, balancing the possible advantages of improvement against the probable dangers of innovation; and contrasting the uproar and confusion of democratic influence with the tranquil excesses of Royal prerogative,

and the peaceable usurpations of Ministerial authority, contend, that the endurance of moderate abuses is less galling to the people, and less dangerous to the constitution, than the commencement of reforms, which might terminate in revolution.

This proposition was, at that time, much agitated, and has since been occasionally awakened, rather by the contests of exasperated faction, than the sincere efforts of disinterested patriotism; and however that measure may be justly eulogized, it has failed to excite successful efforts, and has gently returned again to its accustomed tranquility.

In aid of this system, the public character of the King, as a magistrate, was artfully and successfully identified with his morality and virtue as a private individual—and the Minister not unfrequently screened the errors of his own measures from public justice, lest the investigation should hurt the feelings of a virtuous and beloved Monarch.—The people fell also into this deception; the Ministers never failed to take advantage of the delicacy of their loyalty—and secured themselves under its shade from punishment, for crimes, which, if their King had been vicious, would have brought them to the scaffold.

Mr. John O'Neill, descended from the most celebrated chiefs of ancient Ireland, bore in his portly and graceful mien indications of a proud and illustrious pedigree:—the generous openness of his countenance—the grandeur of his person—and the affability of

his address, marked the dignity of his character, and, blending with the benevolence of his disposition, formed him one of the first Commoners of the Irish nation—a rank, from which he so unfortunately sunk, by humbling his name to the level of purchased Peerages, and descending from the highest bench of the Commons to the lowest amongst the Nobles.

In public and in private life Mr. O'Neill was equally calculated to command respect, and conciliate affection;—high minded—open—and well educated—he cloathed the sentiments of a patriot in the language of a gentleman;—his abilities were moderate, but his understanding was sound—unsuspecting, because he was himself incapable of deception, he too frequently trusted to the judgment of others that conduct which would have been far more respectably regulated by his own;—though he did not shrink from the approbation of the Court, he preferred the applauses of his country, and formed one of the most perfect models of an aristocratic patriot.

The ungrateful sword of that very people whose interests he had espoused, and whose rights he had advocated, terminated the life of this respected character; as if Providence had kindly removed him from the melancholy view of those disgraceful scenes which shortly after, in the person of his successor, sunk his rank and name in the common mass of degraded Lords and extinguished Nobility.

Nothing could operate more injuriously against the interests of Ireland, than this deviation from constitutional principles. The obstinacy of the British Government to accede to the political emancipation of Ireland from her long worn shackles, and the liberation of her commerce from its arbitrary restrictions, were ingeniously attributed by the British Minister to the reluctance of his Majesty to endanger the ascendancy, or contract the superiority, of his British subjects;—his resistance, therefore, to the claims of Ireland, had been popular in England; and every concession of rights to the Irish nation, was pompously represented as not only a most generous condescension, but also a hazardous detraction from the established rights of his other subjects.

However, the British Government found that direct resistance had now become impossible, and something must be done.—The Irish Viceroy, therefore, was instructed to act according to the best of his judgment. Accordingly, on the 9th of October, 1781, he, for the first time, met the Irish Parliament, with a speech from the throne; which, though received with great cordiality by the House, upon a close investigation, appears a composition of the most Jesuitical sophistry:—it complimented the country on a property which it never enjoyed—expressed a solicitude for its interest, which was never experienced—and promised future favours, which were never intended to be conceded—and was mingled, at the same time, with recommendations the most

vague, and observations the most frivolous. The good temper of the House, however, was so excited by the cordial assurances it contained, it was received with general approbation—and Mr. John O'Neill, of Shane's Castle, was very wisely prevailed upon, by the Secretary, to move an address of thanks to his Majesty, for this gracious communication of his Minister—with a view that the weight and character of this gentleman might excite that unanimity, at the present crisis so very desirable, and which must be so highly advantageous to the Irish Government.

This step, however, was instantly succeeded by a measure, which did honor to the patriotic spirit of Mr. O'Neill, and preserved his character in that station, from which it might have sunk, had he concluded his observations, by the fulsome and indecisive address which he had so injudiciously patronized.

As soon as the Address to his Majesty had passed, Mr. O'Neill moved a resolution of thanks to "all the Volunteers of Ireland, for their exertions and continuance." This motion was received with exultation by the Opposition, and created a new embarrassment to the Minister.—To return thanks to a martial body, for their exertions and continuance, which acknowledged no military superiority, and called, with arms in their hands, for civil rights and a new constitution—was a step, undoubtedly, not warranted either by precedent, or authorised by the constitution;—but prompt decision was necessary;—and then Mr.

John Fitzgibbon, in one of the first efforts of that decided but inconsiderate impetuosity which distinguished him throughout life, harshly opposed Mr. O'Neill's motion;—but by endeavouring to support the Government, he deeply embarrassed it;—and Mr. Scott, the Attorney General, on that occasion showed, in it's strongest colours, the advantages of well-regulated policy. He instantly acceded to what he could not oppose, and gave an appearance of full approbation, on the part of the Government, to an address of thanks to those men, whom nothing but that political duplicity which he so amply possessed, could have induced him to approve of.

All opposition to the motion, therefore, fell to the ground.—Mr. Fitzgibbon, however, who never relinquished an object, from a conviction of impropriety, though he persisted in his opposition, was reluctantly necessitated to give way; and an Address to the armed Volunteers of Ireland was unanimously voted—and directed to be circulated throughout all Ireland, and to be communicated by the Sheriffs of the Counties to the corps within their bailiwicks.

Never had a measure been adopted, which gave so sudden and singular a change to the aspect of affairs in Ireland.—It seemed to reverse all the maxims of former Governments—and gave to the people an ascendancy they had never expected.—It legalized a military levy, independent of the Sovereign—and

obliged the Ministers to applaud the exertions, and court the continuance of an army, whose dispersion was the leading object of all their councils.

The effects also of this resolution made a considerable progress towards the actual emancipation of the Irish people ;—it brought down the Government to the feet of the Volunteers, and raised the Volunteers almost above the constitution—by a direct Parliamentary approbation of self-armed—self-governed—and self-disciplined associations—whose motto * bespoke, if not the intent, certainly the fundamental principle of revolution.

* The motto of the Barristers' corps of Volunteers, which always took the lead of, and, in most instances, gave the precedent to, all the other corps, was—" *For Populi suprema Lex est,*"—a maxim which, whilst it gives the widest latitude of construction to the first principles of the constitution, would open too wide a door to democratic authority, unless guarded against by the system of *delegated representation*.

The absolute necessity of this system of *delegation*, to preserve the integrity of the *British* constitution, proves the impolicy of endeavouring to abstract the same system, on any minor occasion ; where the deliberation is *open*, and the ultimate object *legal* and *constitutional*—it is much safer to the State to permit a few respectable individuals occasionally to deliberate on an abstract subject, which must, at all events, be discussed, than to trust to the mediation of a heated and illiterate populace, whose general meetings, and collective political discussions, might be much more likely to disturb a Government.

Whatever may be the construction which Courts of Justice may give to the *Conventian* Act, which now forms a subject of contention between the Irish Attorney General and the Irish people, of all ranks and persuasions, as well as a *considerable* body of the *English*

It also taught the people the strength of their own arms and the timidity of their opponents—they perceived, by the unanimous adoption of this resolution, that the people had only to march, and as certainly to conquer.—It was, in fact, a flag of truce from the Minister—and proved to the world, that, unable to contend, he was preparing to capitulate.

In reflecting on the circumstances which led the Government to this concession, observations on the moral and physical strength of the nation must naturally occur. The Irish nation, saturated with patriotic spirit, by a union of it's mental and corporeal energies, had united in it's narrow focus all the moral and physical powers of which a people are susceptible.

When the physical strength only of a nation is employed in the accomplishment of it's objects, however great it's bodily force, it loses all the advantages of it's dead weight, by the absence of that animating fire of intellect, which alone gave real vigour to bodily exertion;—relying on it's clumsy powers—it's mechanical discipline—and compulsory obedience—it must ever yield to the force of an opposing body, where the moral and the physical powers of the people are blended and inseparable.

nation, there can remain no doubt, in a rational mind, that the mode adopted to put that penal statute in force against some millions of his Majesty's subjects, should have been a matter of the most profound and *general* deliberation in the Councils of the *United Kingdom*, before it was at all resorted to.

On the other hand, when a nation has only moral strength to combat with against a more numerous enemy—however it's exertions may be glorious—it's cause just—it's enthusiasm excessive—still it must yield to numbers and discipline;—it is only, therefore, by a union of all those qualities, that a limited population becomes invincible.—The worn vigour of the body receives inexhaustible subsistence from the energy of the mind, and bids defiance to any power where these qualities are not united.

Thus fortunately circumstanced were the Irish people, at the moment of this resolution—and perhaps in no former period of modern history, has any nation been discovered in so powerful and commanding a position.

A population of above five millions, whose moral and physical powers were so intimately united, that the whole nation seemed one great and active giant, endowed with all the warlike qualities of the human race—one heart—one soul—and one object.

Though the force of prejudice, and the restrictions of intolerant statutes, had limited the possession of arms to a comparatively very small proportion of the people, yet it was difficult to determine whether the armed or disarmed were most zealous for their liberties. The armed and disciplined Volunteers already exceeded in numbers the whole regular military force of the British empire, while those, who, in case of action, would pant to supply the ranks of their fallen countrymen, numerically surpassed the

whole organized military power of the European continent.— This great force also, from the smallness of the island, was collected in a narrow space—it's powers were concentrated—it's resources were always within it's grasp—the sound of the trumpet could reach from one village to the other—every man was ready to obey it's call—and the whole population was prepared to rush to every station where it would be most likely to attain it's liberty and independence.

It was impossible for a reflecting mind not to contrast the noble fire and voluntary spirit, which at this time raised, and imbodyed in patriotic bands, an entire people, for the sole purpose of supporting, with their lives and property, the purest principles of constitutional freedom—with these troops of foreign principalities,* who, at the same moment, were employed, not as

* The auxiliary troops at that time hired from the German States, were not employed in consequence of any *previous* offensive or defensive *treaty*—but by a mere occasional *bargain*, with needy Princes, for the lives of as many of their subjects as they could conveniently dispose of.—For furnishing those beings, England agreed to pay so much *per head*—and so much more for every one of them who was actually slaughtered by the Americans!—A traffic more odious cannot possibly be conceived.—The consequence was just such as might have been expected—and though, perhaps, justifiable in the English Government, who found a necessity for military aid, and wished to purchase it, rather than sacrifice too many of their own people—certainly such sanguinary and unprincipled bargains never could be justified by the venders.

fair auxiliaries, by treaty, on principles, but as mere mercenary automata, collected to suppress the natural liberties of America, and who, had they been successful there, would have made their next triumph over the independence of Ireland—vassals, purchased from the avarice of petty princes, who filled their narrow treasuries, by measuring out the blood of their peasantry to the highest bidder, and transporting their wretched subjects, to put down the eternal rights of civilized society;—men, who had no object but their pay—no enthusiasm but for plunder—bought by mercenary treaty from the potentates of the old world, to massacre and butcher the inhabitants of the new—sold like the oxen of the field, for like profit and like slaughter—and, as the combatants of the brute creation, fighting only through a vicious instinct, and seeking no higher glory than to gore their fellow animals. The success of America, however, gave a decisive blow to this shameless traffic, and fortunately rid Ireland of every prospect of so calamitous a warfare.

Notwithstanding the avowed disposition of the British Legislature, to concede full commercial liberty to Ireland, intrigues were soon fomented, by monopolists, to render abortive, or diminish, as much as possible, the advantages of the concessions; and, amongst other circumstances of that nature, one, of the greatest importance, in every point of view, constitutional as well as commercial, now occurred, and which excited throughout

Ireland well-founded suspicions as to the sincerity of Great Britain.

By the resolutions of the British Legislature, Ireland had been admitted to export her linen and woollen manufactures to Portugal, agreeable to the provisions of the treaty of Methuen; from which liberty she had been previously and explicitly prohibited, by express statutes. The Irish merchant, taking advantage of this concession—liberated from these commercial restrictions, and left freely to wing his way to all the amicable ports of Europe—immediately exported a considerable quantity of Irish manufactures to Portugal; but, to the surprise of the Irish people, the Portuguese Ministry peremptorily refused to receive Irish manufactures into their ports—and not only absolutely prohibited their importation, but seized on the property of the Irish merchants!

This strong and unaccountable proceeding being adopted by a nation, not only in profound peace with Great Britain, but by a people always dependant upon her for protection—subservient to her views, and obedient to her wishes—and by a Court where a British Minister resided—and in ports where British Consuls were resident—it was reasonably inferred, that such a step never durst have been adopted by the Court of Portugal, without the concurrence, or at least the connivance, of the British Cabinet. It was incredible that a Nation, almost dependant upon the will

of England, would presume to insult a federative portion of the British King's dominions—and it became necessary to investigate the grounds of so unwarrantable a proceeding.

No doubt could exist that the active jealousy of the British manufacturers had been roused by the resolutions in favour of Ireland, and that the trade of England might be somewhat affected by these resolutions. The avarice of the British monopolists would naturally take every secret method of counter-acting advantages, the possession of which by Ireland would certainly operate somewhat as a drawback upon their own.

The Irish merchants soon felt the effects of their exclusion ;—their new spirit of enterprize was damped—their earliest commercial exertions were fatally obstructed—their speculations extinguished—and the whole transaction appeared to be of the most suspicious character. The Portuguese nation had adopted a measure towards the realm of Ireland, which she durst not have presumed to apply to Great Britain, whose affected liberality lost all it's merit, and became worthless and inoperative, by her manifest sloth and apathy, on a subject on which she was bound to act with vigour and with promptitude.

The Irish, as a nation, now felt themselves not only aggrieved, but sorely insulted ;—the merchants of Dublin, through their Recorder, Sir Samuel Broadstreet, presented a petition to Parliament, expressive of their sufferings and their disappointment.—

Mr. Eden, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who generally appeared as well disposed towards that country, as the interest or commands of his employers would permit, in this instance, however, had recourse to the usual diplomatic plausibility and procrastination—arguing on the impolicy of precipitation—the good will of the British Ministry—and the disinterested feelings of the British merchants—he resisted any immediate resolution on the subject; and Mr. J. Fitzgibbon, on this occasion, again gave evident proofs of his impetuous antipathy to the interests of his native country, by a strong eulogium upon the liberality of England—and by endeavouring to suppress every enquiry into the causes of this transaction;—and the fair and just petition of the first commercial body in Ireland was, without further discussion, ordered to lie on the table, for the perusal of the Members, and to wait for the result of negotiations, the commencement of which was uncertain, and the termination of which would certainly be protracted.

This proceeding, however, did not satisfy the Irish nation—and, as is generally the case of impolitic, short-sighted evasion, that line of conduct, which was intended to quiet the subject, and evade the investigation, served to raise it into greater notice—and excited a latitude of discussion, which the Irish Government had never thought of, and which ultimately became highly serviceable to the cause of liberty.

Some negotiations were certainly carried on, by the British Ministers, with the Court of Portugal upon the subject, but without either that spirit or sincerity which could effect their purposes. Portugal could have no just cause to resist the admission of Irish manufactures into her ports—she had no distinct treaties with Ireland, and no foreign treaties hostile to the interests of the British empire—she relied on the good will of England and of Ireland for the reception of her own wines, on which so great a proportion of her commerce depended—yet yielding to the secret machinations of interested individuals, she depended on the feebleness and incapacity of Ireland to resist her determination, and on the disposition of England to favour her monopolists—nor was she deceived in her expectation—the lukewarm remonstrances of the British Ministry ended, as was expected, in the perseverance of Portugal; and, at the commencement of the ensuing session, Mr. Eden found Ireland in a state of general agitation—and it became absolutely necessary to retract from his mean system of procrastination—a line of conduct now too palpable, and which the Irish nation would no longer submit to—and feeling it impossible any further to evade the discussion, Mr. Eden, with an address and skill highly useful, on many occasions, to a Minister, determined to anticipate a subject, which he knew must come forward, and, as a Minister, unexpectedly snatch from the Opposition the merit of the enquiry.

This course had many advantages ; it gave a colour of sincerity to the intentions of England, and of candour to those of his own Government ; but above all, it gave him the advantage of exclusive preparation, and enabled him not only to prepare both the statement and the reply, but also to mark out the course he was determined to adopt, and, by previous concert with his supporters, to shift from himself all the blame and unpopularity of an artful delay, and an unpopular termination.

Mr. Eden, on this occasion, with all the symptoms of openness and sincerity, commenced his statement, by representing the strong and unavailing efforts of England to bring the Court of Portugal to a due sense of it's impropriety—and concluded by declaring, that, notwithstanding every effort, the negociation was ineffectual—and that the Minister of Portugal had given a final and adverse answer to the rightful claims of Ireland, though backed by all the zeal and exertions of the British Government—and he artfully affected to leave to the free option of the House, the course it should think proper to adopt on so critical and difficult an occasion—though he had himself previously determined on the proceeding.

This statement, however plausible, could not escape the sagacious penetration of many Members—and it appeared clearly that Mr. Eden had determined, by this means, to rid himself of responsibility, by employing a person of less compunction than himself.

The person who was thus selected for the purpose of again sacrificing the rights of his country, was the same Mr. J. Fitzgibbon who, in the arrogant and able manner so peculiar to himself, seemed rather to command than to move an address to his Majesty, as if it was of his own composition, though in fact it was the production of the Secretary. In this address, he prayed his Majesty to take into his consideration a subject, already discussed, and to apply for a redress, already decidedly negatived—and the whole address was couched in terms feeble, fulsome, and indecisive—and unbecoming the dignity and the importance of an independent Nation.

This vapid and insidious measure was warmly opposed by the real friends of Ireland—and Sir Lucius O'Brien, with a spirit and language which spoke his real attachment to the interests of his country, and a perfect knowledge of it's commercial rights, moved an amendment to Mr. Fitzgibbon's address—the terms of which form a very remarkable circumstance of Irish history—and, by it's peremptory and independent language, led to the consideration of national rights, and constitutional distinctness, which, till that period, had never been so strongly expressed or so decisively put in issue.

Sir Lucius O'Brien was descended from one of the most ancient and illustrious of the aboriginal Irish families, a large part of whose fortune he still retained—and by means of a

rational understanding, and very extensive and accurate commercial information, he acquired a considerable degree of public reputation; though his language was bad—his address miserable—and his figure and action unmeaning and whimsical—yet, as his matter was generally good, his reasoning sound, and his conduct frequently spirited and independent, he was attended to with respect; and, in return, always conveyed considerable information.

It was the fashion of those days for the official supporters of Government, as much as possible, to found their reasoning, or rather to authenticate their assertions, by confused computation and arithmetical fractions—and being on those subjects more versed and skilful than those who had no access to public papers, they could readily puzzle their opponents, by elaborate statements, the accuracy of which nobody could refute, because nobody could understand them—and by this device, plausible conclusions were every day supported by totally fallacious or incomprehensible premises; and an oration of fractions perpetually introduced, to combat plain sense, and defeat dangerous detection.

In this species of reasoning, Mr. John Beresford—the first Commissioner of the Revenue—was particularly expert and successful.—The imports and the exports—the farthings and the millions—the customs and the excise—being duly blended and confused, always afforded him materials for plausible statement

and inexplicable computation—and, with the aid of an address as imposing as his reasoning, he became oracular, and was deemed infallible, in all commercial arguments.

The only person who had the perseverance or ability to make any effectual efforts to refute him, was Sir Lucius. The contraveries of those two Gentlemen were consequently frequent—each was blindly supported by his party; their arguments were in general too abstruse for ordinary comprehensions; and by their eternal collisions, Sir Lucius also acquired the character of a profound calculator and arithmetician on commercial subjects.—Somehow they agreed; but in general Mr. Beresford's speeches were most circumstantial, and Sir Lucius's most accurate and convincing—and both parties frequently retreated, after a drawn battle, and their auditors retired, at the conclusion of the argument, more ignorant than they were at the commencement of it. Upon constitutional questions, however, Sir Lucius was always the victor;—strong and decisive, he carried with him at least a portion of that weight which justly appertained to his information, his family, and his character—and his rival very wisely never followed him out of his own fortifications.

Mr. Fitzgibbon's motion was most strongly reprobated and opposed by Sir Lucius—who, conscious that he could not completely defeat the measure, moved an amendment, which, if adopted, would alter its nature. This amendment called upon

his Majesty, as King of *Ireland*, to assert the rights of *that* kingdom, by hostility with Portugal—and concluding with these remarkable expressions—"we doubt not that this nation has vigour and resources sufficient to maintain all her rights, and astonish all her enemies!"—at once manfully asserting the constitutional independence, and publishing the military power, of his country—and giving to England herself a wholesome hint of her spirit and determination.

The boldness of this motion—it's promptitude—it's vigour—it's consequences—made an instantaneous and visible impression on the whole House;—it was at once a declaration of war—a declaration of rights—and a declaration of superiority;—it opened a new field of discussion, and gave a new character to the Irish Parliament, and a new existence to the Irish people. But they were not yet sufficiently prepared to receive the impression with conclusive effect—their chains were not yet loosened—they had not been enlarged from their prison—and however disposed to adopt this spirited and vigorous proceeding, their keepers were yet too numerous and too strong to permit their liberation.

The address of Mr. Fitzgibbon was, however, opposed by many of the first characters in Ireland; and even some friends of Government, ashamed of it's imbecility, refused to support it.—Sir John Blaquiere, an habitual supporter of the Minister, holding offices and pensions, and who had been himself a Minister,

spiritedly, amongst others, gave it his decided negative.—However, after a warm and animated debate, the Secretary succeeded, and Mr. Fitzgibbon added a new thorn to that goad with which he endeavoured to drive, but which he finally found had only the effect of irritating, the nation.

This circumstance, which might abstractedly have been passed by without much observation, in the common course of political occurrences, in this instance had too comprehensive an effect, to be slurred over in silence.

Sir Lucius O'Brien's amendment gave the keenest spur to the cause of national independence. The King of Ireland, required by an Irish Parliament, and his Irish subjects, to take hostilities, on behalf of Ireland, against a foreign nation, with which England had no quarrel, exhibited a new scene to an enlightened people—and soon excited thoughts and enquiries, which led to the important discussion that soon followed, and at length attained the emancipation of Ireland.

An enquiry into the nature of the federative compact between England and Ireland, now occupied every thinking mind throughout the latter country;—it was a subject which the depressed state of Ireland had heretofore suspended;—so desperate had been it's situation—so desponding the people—so hopeless it's redress—that the nature of that connection had been hardly considered worthy of discussion;—and though it's abuses had been frequently resisted, it's principles had never been defined.

So soon, however, as the people learned that their connection with England was strictly federative—that the King of Ireland might, in right of his Irish crown, make war with a foreign Power—without the King of England (as such) being a principal in the contest—that Ireland was, in it's nature, an independent nation, connected with the Crown of England only, as that country was united to the Electorate of Hanover, by the identity of the Monarch—and that he governed Ireland only in right of his Irish crown, and not as a part of the realm of Great Britain—the features of the Irish constitution soon became familiar to the people, and it's distinctness perfectly apparent, and unequivocally admitted and proved, by the language and the conduct of British Ministers themselves, who calmly permitted Portugal to insult and injure Ireland, without treating it as an insult to, or aggression against, the Crown of Great Britain.

This unanswerable reasoning, and these indisputable facts, now engrossed almost the exclusive consideration of all the armed associations. — It was manifest that, in every point of view, Ireland had been denied the rights of a free constitution, though, in every point of view, she was entitled to enjoy it;—if she was to be considered merely as a partner of the British empire, she was then entitled to the full rights and advantages of the whole British constitution—but if, on the other hand, she was connected with England solely as a federative state—she was then decidedly entitled to enjoy the distinct rights and advantages of a

distinct constitution ;—but, in fact, she enjoyed neither the one nor the other—and that mispractice of Government, though sanctioned by the statutes of the usurping Power, could never bind the constitutional rights and prerogatives of the suffering Nation, longer than until it could mature the power of resistance.

The reason and the justice of these considerations penetrated the understanding of the people, in every quarter of the nation.—The Volunteers reflected, that the remedy was with themselves—their grievances were heavy—their means ample—their determination decisive—and their redress attainable.—If the Parliament would not act, the people would—if the representatives were corrupt, the constituents were honest.—Nothing was necessary but a declaration of the rights of the Nation, and of the will of the People—and England, already humbled, disgraced, and dispirited by America, had lost the means and the spirit of opposition—and would concede, however reluctantly, to the just claims of a free and defined constitution to Ireland.

On the other hand, it was suggested, by those whose irresolution, timidity, or corruption still endeavoured to damp the spirit and curb the impetuosity of the nation, that, circumstanced as England was, it would be ungenerous to take advantage of her feeble moment—to enforce, by threat, those claims which her late conduct evidently showed a disposition to concede, without

force or reluctance—that it would be more magnanimous to wait till Great Britain had recovered from her panic, and from her dangers—to give her time to breathe—and receive from her friendship and generosity those certain and amicable concessions, which would be more gratifying and more permanent, than those acquired by humbling her pride, and taking advantage of her weakness. But this reasoning, peculiarly adapted to the open and generous character of the Irish people, was, in this instance, too feeble to be attended to, and recourse was had to another line of argument.

It was stated that Ireland had no navy to protect her commerce—no wealth to support a contest—and, after a destructive effort, might ultimately fall into the trammels of England, with lost claims and diminished importance. But this reasoning only added to the spirit of the nation—it's pride was roused—it's jealousy excited—and both these lines of argument were ill adapted to a people, who had lately acquired a thorough knowledge of it's own powers and resources—who were now unanimously leagued against usurpation—and who, after an inactivity of almost a century, had once more been roused to that pastime of arms, which had ever been the favorite and predominant passion of the Irish people, from the moment their island had been peopled.—They said, that it was neither ungenerous nor dishonorable to catch the favorable moment of rescuing, from an usurping power,

those liberties which had been wrested from the weakness of their ancestors, and retained from them through the feebleness of themselves—that it is never necessary for the plundered to await the awakening of plunderers to take back their property—that the favorable moment might never recur—and that the laws of God, of Man, and of Nature, prescribe no peculiar moment to assert the liberties of a people, or arrest the oppression of an usurper.

Those grievances which Irishmen so loudly complained of, and those constitutional rights which they so resolutely demanded, were not very numerous, but were indispensable to the liberty not only of the nation, but of the individual.—Ireland had then no security for either;—the Judges dependant on the Crown—the army independent of the Parliament—her Legislature at the feet of the British Attorney-General—and the people bound by the laws of Scotch and English delegates—altogether formed the means and basis of a tyranny, which the caprice or displeasure of England might at any time put in practice.

The precarious state of personal liberty in Ireland, was one of the most glaring grievances—the want of a Habeas Corpus statute gave absolute power to any Government which might venture experiments of a despotic nature—and enabled the Minister to suppress, in the very first instance, the liberty of the

press—the ablest advocate of reform—the most powerful auxiliary of revolution.—But it was now too late—the people were united—and their divisions suspended or forgotten ;—it would have been desperate to have resorted to the hand of power, and in vain to attempt any measure but conciliation.—England was reduced to the singular and humiliating situation of stooping to the dictates of an inferior country—and beholding her arrogant and arbitrary Ministers treating, with all the courtesy of fawning courtiers, a people, armed in defiance of their authority—and conceding to the peremptory demands of the Irish nation, those rights which had been refused, not only by themselves, but by every former Government of Great Britain.

A repeal of the English statute of the 6th of George the First, which declared the eternal slavery of Ireland, and which, whilst it remained in force, would enable Great Britain to recal her concessions, and re-commence her system, as soon as time and circumstance would admit of the re-assumption, was the first and most indispensable measure to be effected—and it required no logical deductions to prove to the armed Volunteers; that the attainment even of all their objects would probably, at a future day, become void and nugatory, unless they tore up by the root that standard of usurpation, whose noxious and innumerable branches blighted the vegetation of liberty.—The effects and operation of this statute became perfectly understood, and

formed one of the most insufferable of those grievances, which the Volunteers, at every risk, were determined to abolish.*

* Nothing can more clearly speak the *determined* spirit of the Volunteers—their *views*—their determination—and the depressed and troubled state of the Irish Government—than the following Resolutions, entered into about this time by the Volunteer corps of the city of Dublin, published in all the News-papers, and circulated throughout every part of the kingdom. The same language was generally adopted by the whole nation—and the Lord Lieutenant was necessitated so far to countenance the proceeding, that, immediately after the publication of these Resolutions, the military bands of the regular army were permitted to attend a review of the very same corps in the Phenix Park—to which they marched, playing the Volunteer's march, under the windows of the Castle, and in the view of his Excellency.—

“At a meeting of the Corps of Dublin Volunteers, at the Eagle, Eustace Street, on Friday, the 1st of March, 1782, his Grace the Duke of Leinster in the chair,

“Resolved, That the King, Lords, and Commons of *Ireland* only are competent to make laws, *binding* the subjects of *this* realm; and that we will not OBEY, or give operation to, ANY laws, save only those enacted by the King, Lords, and Commons of *Ireland*, whose rights and privileges, jointly and severally, we are determined to support with our lives and fortunes.”

“At a meeting of the Corps of Independent Dublin Volunteers, held at the Eagle, in Eustace Street, Dublin, on Tuesday, March the 5th, 1782, Major Cannier in the chair,

“Resolved, That we do *not* acknowledge the jurisdiction of any Parliament, save only the King, Lords, and Commons of *Ireland*.

“Resolved, That we will, in every capacity, oppose the execution of any statute, imposed upon us by the pretended authority of the British Parliament.

A declaration of the people's rights was now demanded in every part of the nation—the press teemed with publications on the subjects best calculated to call patriotism into activity :—the doctrines of Swift, of Molyneux, and of Lucas, were re-published in abstract pamphlets, and placed in the hands of every man who could read them—their principles were recognized and disseminated—the Irish mind became enlightened—and a revolution in literature was made auxiliary to a revolution in liberty.

Delegates from all the armed bodies of the people were regularly appointed by their respective corps—and met, for the purpose of giving additional weight and importance to their resolves, by conjointly declaring their sentiments and their determination. These meetings, first confined to districts, soon multiplied, and extended themselves to the counties—thence to provinces—and at length to the united nation ;—their deliberation became regular and public, and their resolutions decisive—and at length the celebrated convention at Dungannon was convoked, which formed a most remarkable incident of Irish history, and one of the

“ Resolved, That we will support, with our *lives and fortunes*, the Parliament of Ireland, in declaring and asserting it's rights.”

These Resolutions at once repealed the 6th of George the First, as to it's operation, and left the British Government in the most embarrassing dilemma how to act, as to the laws then in force, under the sanction of that act.

wisest and most temperate measures, that ever signalized the good sense, good conduct, and the spirit of a people.

The northern counties of Ireland, (by far the most populous part of the nation)—though not more spirited, were certainly more regular and more intelligent than the other provinces—took the lead in this celebrated meeting. The armed associations of Ulster first appointed delegates, to declare the sentiments of their province, in a general assembly ;—and, on the 15th day of February, 1782, one of the most solemn and impressive scenes which Ireland had ever witnessed, took place in the inconsiderable town of Dungannon.

There were, comparatively but few Roman Catholics in the northern counties of Ireland, and still fewer of the strictly Protestant religion. The population of Ulster is almost universally Dissenters—a people materially differing in character from the aboriginal inhabitants—particularly sharp witted—fond of reform, and not hostile to equality—ever examining the constitution by it's theory, and seeking a recurrence to original principles—prone to intolercancy, without being absolutely intolerants—and disposed to republicanism, without being absolutely republicans ;—of Scottish origin, they partake of many of the peculiarities of that hardy people ; penetrating—harsh minded—persevering—selfish—frugal, by their industry they acquire individual, and by individual political independence ; as brave, though less impetuous than the western

and southern Irish, they are more invariably formidable ;—deep and deliberate in their designs, they are steady and firm in their execution of them ;—less slaves to their passions than to their interest, their habits are generally temperate—their address quaint, blunt, and ungracious—their dialect harsh and disagreeable—their persons hardy and vigorous. With those qualities, the Northern Irish convoked delegates from twenty-five thousand soldiers, to collect the sentiments of the Irish people.

This celebrated meeting was conducted with a decorum, firmness, and discretion unknown to the popular meetings of other times and of other countries.—Steady, silent, and determined—two hundred delegated Volunteers, cloathed in the uniform and armed with the arms of their respective regiments, marched, two and two, to the Church of Dungannon—a place selected for the sanctity of it's nature, to give the greater solemnity to this memorable proceeding.

The entrance of the Delegates into that sacred place, was succeeded by an awful silence, which pervaded the whole assembly ;—the glittering arms of two hundred patriots, for the first time selected by their countrymen, to proclaim the wrongs and grievances of the people, was in itself a scene so uncommon and so interesting, that many of those men, who were ready in a moment to shed the last drop of their blood in the cause of their country, as soldiers, were softened into tears, while

contemplatively they surveyed that assembly, in which they were about to pledge themselves to measures, irrevocably committing Ireland with her sister nation—the result of which must determine the future fate of themselves—their children—and their country.

CHAP. VI.

Account of the Dungannon Meeting continued.—Mr. Francis Dobbs.—His extraordinary Character.—Colonel Irwin, &c. &c.—The Dungannon Resolutions adopted throughout Ireland.—The Earl of Bristol.—The Bishop of Derry declares for Irish Independence.—Sketch of his Character.—Resistance to English Laws unanimously decided on.—Declarations of the Irish Volunteers, disclaiming all British Authority.—Their Leaders.—Inconsistency of many of them on a subsequent Occasion.—State of the Irish Parliament.—Members divided into Classes.—The leading Members.—Mr. Yelverton.—His Character.

THIS memorable assemblage of patriotism and discretion, whose proceedings soon became a theme of eulogium throughout every nation of Europe, was composed of men not of an ordinary description—they were generally persons of much consideration amongst the Volunteer associations—selected for character and abilities—many of them persons of high rank and large fortune—some of them Members of Parliament—and all of them actuated by one heart—filled with one spirit, and determined upon one procedure.

Amongst those who, at this time, first distinguished themselves, was Mr. Francis Dobbs, who afterwards became a person of singular reputation—the mere incidents of whose life have nothing

to engage diffusely the pen of an historian :—no great transitions of rank—no deep depressions—no unexpected elevation—no blaze of genius—no acts of heroism—distinguished his moderate and peaceable progress through the world—but the extraordinary bent of his understanding, and the whimsical, though splendid, extravagances of his eccentric mind, introduced him into a notice, which the common exercises of his talent would never have effected.

Francis Dobbs was a gentleman of respectable family, but of moderate fortune—he had been educated for the bar, where he afterwards acquired some reputation as a constitutional lawyer, and much as a zealous advocate—but his intellect was of an extraordinary description ;—he seemed to possess two distinct minds—the one adapted to the duties of his profession, and the usual offices of society—the other, diverging from it's natural centre, led him through wilds and ways, rarely frequented by the human understanding—entangled him in a maze of contemplative deduction from revelation to futurity—and frequently decoyed his judgment beyond the frontiers of reason. His singularities, however, seemed so separate from his sober judgment, that each followed it's appropriate occupation without interruption from the other, and left the Theologist and the Prophet sufficiently distinct from the Lawyer and the Gentleman.

There were but few virtues he did not, in some degree, partake of—nor were there any vices discernible in his disposition;—though obstinate and headstrong, he was gentle and philanthropic—and, with an ardent temper, he was inoffensive as an infant.

By nature a patriot and an enthusiast—by science a lawyer and an historian—on common topics he was not singular, and on subjects of literature was informed and instructive;—but there is sometimes a key in the human mind, which cannot be touched without sounding those wild chords which never fail to interrupt the harmony of reason—and when expatiating on the subjects of antichrist and the millennium, his whole nature seemed to undergo a change—his countenance brightened up, as if by the complacent dignity of a prophetic spirit—his language became earnest—sometimes sublime—always extraordinary—and not unfrequently extravagant.

These doctrines, however, he made auxiliaries to his view of universal politics—and persuaded himself of the application and infallibility of his reasoning. Mankind has an eternal propensity to be seduced by the lure of new sects, and entangled in the trammels of inexplicable mysteries;—and problems of theology, in their nature incapable of demonstration, are received with avidity by the greediness of superstition;—but the grand paths of

revelation should be trodden with awful caution, as a labyrinth, through the deep windings of which the curious traveller vainly expects to see the light of heaven break in full upon him; whilst in fact he is only plunging deeper and deeper into that impenetrable obscurity with which Providence has wisely surrounded prescience, concealing the events of futurity from the view of mortals.

Yet on these mysterious subjects Mr. Dobbs seemed to feel no difficulties—he devoted a great proportion of his time to the developement of revelation—and attempted to throw strange and novel lights on divine prophecy.*—This was the string on which his

* Mr. Dobbs published, in 1782, some excellent and spirited *Letters on the Independence of Ireland*. He also published a *Universal History*, and several miscellaneous tracts, of which few appeared altogether untouched by his favourite topic, revelation.—He was a most active and zealous volunteer officer—quite devoted to the cause of Irish independence—by which he acquired the notice of the earl of Charlemont, through whose interest he was afterwards brought into the house of commons. In truth, his prophecy as to the independence of Ireland is not as yet completely falsified—because the union has hitherto operated as little more than a transfer of a few Irish representatives to an imperial parliament, the local executive of Ireland acting still a very distinct part—the principle of an imperium in imperio having by no means been altogether extinguished in fact, and only a sufficient portion of the Irish constitution removed, to consolidate and render taxation more extensive and facile, and the management of the resident government less embarrassing to the minister.

Mr. Dobbs was a decided enemy to the measure of union—and, on a debate on that subject in 1800, delivered the most extraordinary discourse ever uttered in a public assembly. For a few minutes, his whimsical turn of reasoning and his extravagant deductions occasioned

reason seemed often to vibrate—and his positions all tended to one extraordinary conclusion :

“That Ireland was decreed by Heaven to remain for ever an independent state, and was destined to the supernatural honour of receiving the Antichrist:”—and this he laboured to prove from passages of Revelation.

Thoroughly impressed with this conviction and upon these grounds, he founded his arguments in the Irish parliament on the moral impossibility of effecting an incorporate union with Great Britain—most confidently laying it down as an infallible prediction, “that no legislative authority or human power could ever incorporate Ireland with that country or with any other nation.”

As frequently becomes the fate of men whose common sense and individual interests yield precedence to their honest zeal or to their public principles, Mr. Dobbs, some time before his death, was sinking into unmerited neglect and difficulties—and not unfre-

rather a buzz of ridicule in the house—but he was soon listened to with respect, and at length the most profound silence and attention were observed, which continued uninterrupted for several hours, until he had finished a most sublime and impressive speech:—of this speech nearly thirty thousand copies were printed and circulated throughout Ireland, and a strange and strong impression was made by it on many whose minds were susceptible of the same fanaticism;—but, satisfied with his reception in the house, he never followed up his doctrines by any similar speech or publication, and the subject has dwindled into almost total oblivion.

quently became the theme of sarcastic observation by those who were themselves devoid of his talents, and unpractised in the honest course of his integrity and virtues. Mr. Dobbs's address was mild and conciliatory, but decisive and earnest—his person was of the middle size—his features were not sufficiently marked to indicate any extraordinary talent or eccentricity—it was a plain—generous—open countenance, that admitted of no peculiar physiological observations—and the only predominant traits of his character which could be collected from superficial observation—were those of zeal and honesty.

At the Duncannon meeting, Mr. Dobbs first appeared as a delegate from a northern volunteer corps—he was afterwards appointed a member of the national convention of Ireland for the province of Ulster—and will be found, throughout the whole course of Irish events during his life, a distinguished and ardent advocate for the constitutional rights of his country.

The deliberations of the Duncannon meeting were continued for several days without interruption or intermission:—it's discussions were calm and dignified—it's resolutions firm, moderate, and patriotic—every member of that assembly, on taking his seat in the awful hall, felt the great importance and novelty of his delegation—as the elected representative of united civil and military bodies—blending the distinct functions of the armed soldier and of the deliberative citizen, to protect his country against the still more un-

constitutional coalescence of a mercenary army and an external legislature.

Colonel Irwin, a northern gentleman of the highest respectability—of a discreet, moderate, and judicious, though active, steady, and spirited character—was called to the chair by the unanimous voice of the assembly, and conducted himself in that most important precedency, throughout the whole of the business, with a moderation and decorum, which aid the cause, and never fail to give weight to the claims, of a people.

At length, on the 15th of February 1782, this assembly finally framed and agreed upon that celebrated declaration of rights and of grievances, under which the Irish nation had so long been languishing—and announced to the world the substantial causes by which its commerce had been so long restrained, and every trace of a free constitution almost obliterated.

To give the complexion of constitutional legality to the unprecedented organization of this meeting—it was thought judicious to refer pointedly to the first principle of popular freedom, universally admitted, established, and acted upon in England by the Revolution, namely, “the people’s right of preparatory resistance to unconstitutional oppression.”—The assembly therefore plainly recognized that principle by its first resolution*—“That citizens, by

* “Whereas it has been asserted that volunteers, as such, cannot with propriety debate or give their opinions on political subjects, or the conduct of parliaments or public men—

learning the use of arms, abandon none of their civil rights"—thereby asserting the otherwise questionable legality of a self-created military body, exercising also the deliberative functions of a civil

"Resolved unanimously, That a citizen, by learning the use of arms, does not abandon *any* of his *civil* rights.

"That a claim of *any* body of men, other than the KING, LORDS, AND COMMONS OF IRELAND, to make laws to bind *this* kingdom, is *unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.*

"That the power exercised by the privy council of both kingdoms, under pretence of the law of *Poynings*, is *unconstitutional and a grievance.*

"That the ports of this country are by *right* open to *all* foreign countries not at war with the king, and that any burthens thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the parliament of IRELAND, are *unconstitutional, illegal, and grievances.*

"That a ^{proposed} ~~proposed~~ bill, not limited in point of duration from session to session, is *unconstitutional and a grievance.*

"That the independence of judges is equally essential to the impartial administration of justice in Ireland, as in England; and that the refusal or delay of this right to Ireland, makes a distinction where there should be no distinction; may excite jealousy where perfect union should prevail; and is in itself *unconstitutional and a grievance.*

"That it is our *decided and unalterable* determination to seek a redress of these grievances; and we pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, as freeholders, fellow-citizens, and men of honour, that we will, at every ensuing election, support those only who have supported us therein, and that we will use every constitutional means to make such our pursuit of redress, *speedy and effectual.*

"That as men, and as Irishmen, as christians, and as *protestants*, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman-Catholic fellow-subjects; and that we con-

delegation—and boldly bottoming the assertion of that right upon the very same principle which the prince of Orange had used to mount the throne of Great Britain—"the popular expulsion of a tyrannical monarch."

This resolution was also wisely adapted to check all legal proceedings, or even ministerial cavil, as to the constitutionality of their meeting, by putting in direct issue with the British Government a previous question of right, which, if contested, must have drawn into public discussion and controversy the principles of the Revolution, and the very tenure of the crown of England; for the English nation had by that revolution exploded the doctrine of passive obedience, and, acting on that ground, had armed against their own sovereign, and put the sword of popular resistance into the hand of William, to cut away the allegiance of the Irish people even to his own father.

ceive the measure to be fraught with the *happiest consequences* to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.

"That four members from each county of the province of Ulster (eleven to be a quorum) be, and hereby are appointed, a committee till next general meeting, to act for the volunteer corps here represented, and, as occasion shall require, to call general meetings of the province.

"That the said committee do appoint nine of their members to be a committee in Dublin, in order to communicate with such other volunteer associations in the other provinces, as may think proper to come to similar resolutions, and to deliberate with them on the most constitutional means of carrying them into effect."

The Duncannon meeting next proceeded to denounce, by subsequent resolutions, as altogether unconstitutional, illegal, and grievances—all British legislation over Ireland—the law of Poyning—the restraint of Irish commerce—a permanent standing army in Ireland—the dependence of the superior judges on the crown, and consequently on the minister:—and the assembly finally resolved to seek a redress of all those grievances—and invited the armed bodies of the other provinces of Ireland to unite with them in the glorious cause of constitutional regeneration.

The most weighty grievances and claims of Ireland were by these means, in the mildest and simplest language, without argument or unnecessary observation, consolidated into one plain and intelligible body of resolutions—entered into by delegates from twenty-five thousand Ulster soldiers, and backed by the voice of above a million of inhabitants of that province,—combining together the moral and physical strength of one of the strongest quarters of Ireland—all actuated by a fixed and avowed determination to attain redress at every risk of life and fortune—and headed by the highest and most opulent gentlemen of that province, feeling the claims to be equally just and irresistible—and therefore not speculating on success without substantial grounds, or denouncing grievances without solid and just foundation.

The truth and simplicity of those resolutions—whilst they defied every imputation of party faction or of revolutionary disloyalty—

yet convinced the minister that the Irish people would be no longer trifled with.—By the firmness that was observed respecting them, the wavering were steadied, the too moderate, roused—and the too ardent, moderated—while the adverse were deterred by an anticipation of their success.—Adapted to almost every class, and to the disposition of almost every character, their effect through all Ireland was electric, and the consequence fully answered the most sanguine hopes, nay wishes, of their framers.

These resolutions also carefully steered from the danger of public alarm, by complicated or extravagant claims. Wisely embracing only the most prominent and unconstitutional grievances, they judiciously disembarrassed the great cause, and diverted the public eye from all detailed and minor subjects of animadversion, on which differences of opinion might with reason be expected.—Founding their first demands only on established political truisms, of which both nations must admit the justice, yet without closing the wide field of further discussions—calm and skilful, they judiciously seemed to limit, but without actually compromising, the further claims of the nation.—They sought no novelties, but the pure enjoyment of the common constitution—and demanded the removal of old oppression, without once touching on any point of radical innovation.—This moderation, whilst it restrained the factious, strengthened the patriotic, and formed the very best possible commencement for the progress and attainment of ulterior objects.

Having passed these resolutions, the assembly adjourned, committing the further procedure to the coincidence and zeal of the other provinces of the nation; and, with a discretion almost unparalleled, a body of patriots—who might in one week have collected a military force, which all the power of England could not then have coped with, and, at the head of an irresistible army in a triumphant attitude, might have dictated their own terms to a trembling government—by their wise and temperate conduct avoided the horrors of a civil commotion*—proved to the world the genuine attachment of Ireland to her sister country—and deliberately represented to Great Britain the grievances, which, by more hostile proceedings, they could by their own power have redressed in a moment.

This transaction, which, with reference to all its circumstances, may be ranked as one of the most extraordinary incidents that have marked the page of modern history, brought into notice a most singular personage—Frederick Earl of Bristol—an Englishman by birth, a British peer and bishop of Derry—who altogether adopted

* A great proportion of the English army were then employed in America; those under General Burgoyne and Lord Cornwallis had been captured by the Americans; while nearly one third of the disposable military force of England were Irishmen, who could not be expected to have acted against their countrymen in such a cause.—It would therefore have been at that time difficult for England to have mustered ten thousand disposable English troops to act in Ireland in the event of a civil war—and there were scarcely less than six hundred thousand men in Ireland able and willing to join the volunteer associations in case of a rupture.

the views, and avowed himself a partizan for the rights, of Ireland.—Like many others of his profession, not content with ecclesiastical authority, he became ambitious of political power*, and sought,

* The bishop at one time assumed nearly a royal state. Dressed in purple he appeared in the streets of Dublin in a coach drawn by six horses—and attended by a troop of light-dragoons as a life-guard—which had been raised, and was commanded, by his nephew, the unfortunate and guilty George Robert Fitzgerald, whose character and catastrophe, had they been materially connected with the transactions of Irish history, would have formed a curious and an interesting episode. Educated in the very highest circles of society at home and abroad—endowed with ample estates—a most engaging exterior—fascinating manners, and the highest polish—he concealed under that cloak the most ferocious, savage, impetuous, and inflexible vices: in the drawing-room a finished courtier—in private a merciless murderer—his manners equally attracted the gentleman and the villain, and he had his partizans amongst both.—He enjoyed great popularity in the western parts of Ireland, where he generally had a regiment of his tenantry or partizans embodied, ready to commit any atrocity he might lead them to.—He had been a great favourite at many of the continental courts, and was particularly noticed at the court of the unfortunate queen of France. His life was a complete miscellany—and at this period he attached himself to the bishop, and became his devoted partizan—and an active volunteer officer. At length he died by the hands of the executioner, near his own mansion at Castlebar, for abetting the murder of his neighbour, a Mr. O'Donnell. Government, who had determined to end his career the first opportunity, sent down the then attorney-general (Lord Clare) with a special commission to prosecute him—he was defended by Sir Edmund Stoulby, and tried before Lord Yelverton—he was found guilty, no doubt according to strict justice, but as certainly contrary to strict law—and in that point of view, to use Judge Robinson's sarcastic dictum on the occasion, "the murderer was murdered." He had been assassinated whilst in prison—received many wounds—

by patriotic professions and decisive conduct, to place himself at the head of the Irish nation. Possessed of an immense revenue—by rank a temporal peer—by consecration a spiritual one—with powerful patronage—and extensive connexions—he united most of the qualities best calculated to promote his objects—and in particular, had acquired a vast popularity amongst the Irish, by the phenomenon of an English nobleman identifying himself with the Irish nation, and appearing inferior to none in a zealous assertion of their rights against his own countrymen.—It was a circumstance too novel and too important to escape their marked observation, and a conduct too generous and magnanimous not to excite the love and call forth the admiration of a grateful people.

He was a man of elegant erudition—extensive learning—and an enlightened and classical, but eccentric mind:—bold, ardent, and versatile—he dazzled the vulgar by ostentatious state, and worked upon the gentry by ease and condescension:—he affected public candor, and practised private cabal:—without the profound dissimulation of Becket, or the powerful abilities of Wolsey, he was little inferior to either of them in their minor qualities—and altogether formed an accomplished, active, and splendid nobleman—a plau-

and had not perfectly recovered at the time of his trial—he was tried as an accessory before the fact—and convicted by the testimony of the actual murderer, who was admitted an evidence. By the bungling of the executioner, he fell alive from a great height—was again tied up, and died with great pain, diminished fortitude, and some penitence.

sible and powerful prelate—and a seemingly disinterested and zealous patriot:—he was admirably calculated to lead on an inflamed and injured people; and had there been no counteracting discretion in the country—at a crisis too, when almost any measure could have been carried by boldness, popularity, and perseverance—it is more than probable his views might have extended to the total separation of the two nations.

But though the voice of the people had decided unanimously upon two points, namely, national independence and a redress of grievances—yet many different shades of opinion existed among some of the leading characters, as to the precise time and modes of proceeding to attain those objects. The moderate and cautious party in general followed the wise and prudent, though sometimes tardy, indecisive, and feeble counsels of Earl Charlemont—whilst the more bold, decisive, and straight-forward conduct of the bishop of Derry, appeared far more congenial to the critical and proud position of the Irish nation, and better adapted to hasten the attainment of their rights, than the slow and almost courtly approaches of the Charlemont system.

As the bishop's views became more clearly developed, he obviously sought to carry measures much more rapidly—perhaps further—than his discreet cotemporaries.

The duke of Leinster also, as well as Mr. Brownlow, and many of those who had occasionally been in the habit of supporting the

Irish government, leaned to the moderate and regular course of proceeding recommended by Earl Charlemont—whilst fewer of the leaders, but more of the people, followed the fascinating boldness of the military prelate, who wished to take instant advantage of a crisis, the continuance of which might be uncertain;—and the conduct of those two noblemen becoming decidedly dissimilar, if not altogether adverse, it was soon apparent that one or the other of them must necessarily sink in public estimation.

This contest for pre-eminence, however, was carried on only at a distance—and in no respect impeded the general cause:—the partizans of each never came into decisive collision, until a contest for the presidency of the general national convention quietly decided that important point in favour of Earl Charlemont—and the rough dissolution of that assembly soon after put a final conclusion to the power and controversies of both those personages.

However, on one point, no difference of opinion existed between them—all the leading characters were unanimous as to giving immediate and full effect to the Duncannon resolutions, by calling upon every military association in the kingdom forthwith to declare their public sentiments on all the important subjects discussed by that assembly.—An immense number of publications immediately issued from the press, auxiliary to this determination—an increased activity as well as spirit pervaded the whole kingdom—meetings were called in every county, city, town, and village—the municipal

as well as military bodies held public meetings—the determination of all coincided with those of Duncannon—no important difference of opinion existed—all appeared unanimous in the common cause—and Poynings Law, the true parent of all Irish grievances, became the pass-word of liberty.*—A particular word has frequently had an extraordinary effect in exciting the enthusiasm—and rousing the passions of the Irish people. “Poynings Law,” therefore, acquired by repetition almost the power of a talisman—it operated on all occasions as a reviving stimulant against the usurpation of England—and became the most obnoxious and reprobated of all their grievances.

The statute of George the First, declaratory of the legislative supremacy of the British parliament over Ireland—though a more modern, was a still more decisive grievance; as, without its abolition, the redress of all other grievances would be vain and precarious.

These statutes had originally been enacted upon principles the most unjust, and for objects the most tyrannical—the first, to re-

* The practice of using a particular word or expression, to rouse the people to certain military exploits, was always peculiarly prevalent in Ireland—so much so, that it was thought necessary to prohibit by a special act of parliament the use of this species of excitement; and a statute was enacted to prevent the Irish people from using the words *Cram-a-boo*, *Butter-a-hoo*, &c. &c. &c. and in 1782 the words *Poynings Law* were universally received as synonymous to *tyranny* and *oppression*.

duce the Irish house of commons to a mere instrument of the privy council of both nations, and consequently of the British cabinet—the second, to neutralize the Irish legislature altogether, and to establish an appellant jurisdiction to the British lords, whereby every decree and judgment of the Irish superior courts, which could tend to affect or disturb the questionable or bad titles of the British adventurers and absentees to Irish estates or Irish property, might be reversed or rendered abortive in Great Britain by a vote of the Scotch and English nobility. Many British peers and commoners, through whose influence the latter statute had been enacted, had themselves been deeply interested in effecting that measure, to secure their own grants of Irish estates—and some British judges were led to disgrace their judicial character by giving decisive opinions on the justice of a statute unequivocally illegal and unconstitutional. It was therefore unanimously agreed upon by all the armed associations of Ireland, to publish, on their own behalf, and that of the nation in general, a counter declaration to that of the British judges, renouncing all future obedience to that statute—by one bold and decisive step to throw off the weight of that usurped authority altogether;—and, by actual unanimous resistance to its operation, for ever extinguish the most extravagant and illegal assumption of power, which one free country and limited monarchy ever yet attempted to impose upon a people, supposed to wear even the tattered garb of freedom.

The volunteers reasoned—and reasoned unanswerably—that an attempt to legislate for a nation, not represented in the acting legislature, was the very acme of despotic power—the practical ground of tyrannic polity—and, whether exercised by a king, a parliament, or a privy council, was ^{entirely unnatural} ~~unnatural~~ to the governed—it was still a subjection to foreign jurisdiction, which nothing but the rights of conquest and the superiority of power could justify or perpetuate.

It was upon the same principle, though differently modified, that Pagan princes had established Christian slavery:—it was upon the same principle, that so large a portion of the Eastern world was subjugated to the domination of a few British merchants;—and it was the success of that vicious precedent, the 6th of George the ^{First} ~~Third~~, which the despondency or imbecility of Ireland had heretofore rendered her incapable of resisting, which had encouraged the British parliament also fatally to attempt to legislate for America:—but it was a species of usurpation which the renovating principles of the British constitution itself never could extend to a sister nation—and which the immutable laws of nature gave her the right of resisting, the very first opportunity which occurred to render that resistance effectual.

It was now perfectly understood by the Irish people, that the British statute in question, having passed only in England, could have received the royal assent by George the First only as king of Great Britain—in which distinct capacity the Irish nation altogether

denied his power or authority over Ireland—because the federative principle, though it placed the two distinct crowns of the two distinct nations for ever in one dynasty, yet acted in the name of two distinct legislations, and if it authorized the legislature of either nation to counter-legislate for the other—it must have reciprocally authorized both—and would equally have enabled the Irish parliament, and George the First, as king of Ireland, to pass a similar statute, declaratory of their legislative supremacy over the kingdom of Great Britain.

The truth of this position admitted of no argument:—but even if it did, the physical strength of Ireland was now too much alive to its own power to admit of any prolonged discussion upon so clear a subject:—all diplomatic evasions were now useless—the Irish people were right, and they were peremptory—the British government was wrong, and it was intimidated—the English fleets and armies, crowded with Irishmen, could not be supposed to remain indifferent spectators to such a contest with their own country—the claim of rights was upon a principle so plain and so comprehensive, that soldiers and sailors could not be supposed to be ignorant of what the simplest peasant was capable of understanding.

The Irish judges (though some of them, as before remarked, were very respectable men) were at this time but little to be trusted on subjects respecting which England appeared to be deeply in-

volved, or the Minister much interested*—the precarious tenure of their offices almost obliged them to be partizans for British supremacy—and, being totally dependent on the government for their bread, were well prepared and duly influenced to discountenance, and, if possible, by judicial dictums to put down the military associations.—It was therefore obviously necessary, that the public declaration of positive resistance to all British statutes and

* The cruelties exercised by Queen Elizabeth's soldiery in Ireland were so atrocious and indiscriminating, that the whole nation was nearly depopulated: the castles of noblemen were razed, their lands deserted, and two thirds of the country granted by the queen to her soldiers, officers, and needy adventurers, who had been led thither in the expectation of plunder.

The devastations by Cromwell were still more complete, and his grants also numerous—nor were they relieved by the gratitude of Charles II., though the forfeitures had been incurred in defence of his father—and the grants made by his father's murderer.

The whole nation was again devastated by William III., because the Irish people continued faithful to their hereditary king, and would not support the children in dethroning their father.

All the grants of Irish lands made by Cromwell and William were, as to Ireland, the forfeitures of loyalists, and the grants of intruders—and in many cases being founded on corrupt inquisitions, and on penal laws, were informal—and, if questioned in due season before independent and impartial jurisdictions, might have been shaken and overthrown. This, of course, alarmed the grantee proprietors, and accounts for the pertinacious opposition made in England to have the Irish judges independent of the government, and to have the appeal confined to the British and not the Irish house of peers.

legislation should be universal, proceeding from all ranks, and all bodies, civil and military—magistrates and people—that by its generality every attempt to check it by judicial interference, or individual prosecution, might be rendered impracticable and desperate.

The armed associations, therefore, assembled in every quarter of the kingdom, and, by corps and regiments, distinctly adopted the resolutions of the Duncannon meeting, and explicitly declared—“that no earthly authority, save the king, lords, and commons of Ireland, had power to make laws for their country—and that they would resist, with their lives and fortunes, the execution of all British statutes, affecting to bind the independent kingdom of Ireland.”

These resolutions* were unanimously adopted by the volunteer

* The author's father and brothers commanded four volunteer regiments—viz. the Cullenagh Rangers—Dunrow Light-dragoons—Kilkenney Horse—and Ballyroom Cavalry.—The first essay of the author's political pen was the following resolutions, adopted by the first of those corps; and proves that an attachment to the constitutional independence of Ireland had been the earliest, as it was the last, of his political predilections.

“At a meeting of the Cullenagh Rangers, 22d of May ¹⁷⁸²~~1802~~—COLONEL BARRINGTON in the chair—The following resolutions were unanimously agreed to:—

“Resolved, That, as citizens armed in defence of the laws and constitution of our country, and disclaiming every political jurisdiction, save the king, lords, and commons of IRELAND—we are determined to resist, with our lives and fortunes, every statute which the usurped authority of the British parliament have heretofore enacted, or may hereafter attempt to impose on a country determined to be FREE.

corps in every province of Ireland, some in more cool, others in warmer language, but all to the same effect—all in terms equally decisive—explicit—and patriotic.

The necessity of adopting the Duncannon resolutions distinctly as to all their points, was manifest; for they were so congenial in their nature, and so closely allied, as to be inseparable. That respecting the independence of Irish judges seemed quite indispensable to the security of individuals, perhaps to the success of any of their other measures. Unless judges were totally independent of the king and his government, their purity never could be confidently relied on, in any case where the crown and the subject might be at issue on questions of English legislation.

To preserve in legal decisions as much as possible the appearance of consistency, judges generally consider themselves as bound to follow the precedents of their predecessors—and when imperative justice and their own conviction oblige them to over-rule any of

“Resolved, That we heartily coincide in all the resolutions of the Duncannon meeting, as the surest step towards redressing those grievances, which it was as impolitic in England to adopt, as it would be pusillanimous in Ireland to submit to.

Signed, by order of the corps, . .

GEORGE REILY, Secretary.”

Resolutions to the same effect were entered into by almost every regiment in Ireland, and published together in two large volumes.

This book is now very difficult to procure.

those precedents, they do so delicately, upon some actual or supposed shade of distinction between the cases, authorizing an alteration of rule, without a change of principle—which alteration would otherwise prove, that wrong had been done to either the former or the latter suitor—and the repugnant decisions would appear to form a code of legal incongruity—changing it's rules as often as it changed it's interpreters, and exhibiting justice as obscure, and decision as inconclusive.

But as to Ireland, the decided opinion of a celebrated British judge, that “she was by right, as well as law, bound by all British statutes specially naming her,” would have been a precedent permanently imperative, or dependent on Irish judges, whose offices would probably have become sacrifices to their honesty, had they presumed to over-rule or question so paramount an authority. The total independence of the Irish judges on the crown was therefore indispensable to the Irish people, and was peremptorily demanded by the whole nation.

The volunteers also perceived, that, though their exertions for national independence might by their then power and unanimity, be entirely successful, yet, as the concessions might probably be rather extorted from the fears than granted by the generosity of England—if Ireland had judges dependent on the British cabinet, and Great Britain possessed the power of supporting a standing army in Ireland, which might be regulated, paid, and increased at

pleasure, without the control of the Irish parliament—England, when she recovered her strength, might re-assume her power, and, by the decision of those dependent judges, and the influence of that standing army, reclaim, as soon as the volunteers were disembodied, all her concessions, punish the champions of Irish liberty, and again plunge Ireland into its former state of dependence and imbecility*.

They therefore saw the necessity of a mutiny bill, enacted by their own parliament, and limited in its duration, as in England, only from session to session; by which the Irish parliaments would constitutionally acquire the power of protecting their national independence, as their refusing to re-enact the mutiny bill would at any time operate as a discharge of the whole standing army of the Irish establishment.—This and nothing less than this could effectually preserve the nation from future shackles, should any minister of Great Britain be bold enough again to attempt the subjugation of the country.—Accordingly, this resolution of the Duncannon meeting was also unanimously decided on throughout

* The Irish parliament took the most quiet, constitutional, and effectual means of carrying their point, that could possibly be suggested. Their sessions were biennial, and consequently their grants to government were for two years at once—and till more money was required, their legislative was inactive.—They now determined on granting supplies to the crown for six months only, as a hint that they would grant no more till their grievances were redressed:—this had its effect.

all Ireland, and formed one of those demands from which the volunteers determined never to recede,—and never to lay down their arms until they had unequivocally obtained it.

Reasons, equally cogent and conclusive, induced the volunteers to adopt and peremptorily to insist upon each of the other resolutions of the Duncannon meeting—whilst the old habits of domination—the pride of national superiority—the prejudices of a mistaken policy—the avarice of monopolizing commerce—and the principles of an arbitrary ministry—equally operated against such concessions. But England felt that she had neither pretences to justify, or means or strength to support, a direct refusal of the claims of Ireland.

When a people are bold enough to throw off oppression, strong enough to resist it, and wise enough to be unanimous, they must succeed.—Oppression, though clothed in all the haughtiness of arbitrary power, is ever accompanied by the timidity of guilt. On the contrary, a just resistance to tyranny, however feeble in its commencement, acquires strength in its progress—the stimulants of rising liberty, like the paroxysms of fever, often communicating a supernatural strength to a debilitated body.—Ireland had arrived at that crisis—her natural vigor was rapidly surmounting the malignancy of her disorder—and her dormant powers at once burst forth on an astonished empire and an embarrassed administration.

By this time the national armed force had greatly increased, not only in numbers, but in respectability—and had improved, not only in discipline, but in all the military requisites for a regular and active army.

Though about that period there were nominally nearly ninety thousand soldiers ready at the trumpet's call—armed, disciplined, and regimented—burning with impatience for the enjoyment of their liberties—not acting on a wild enthusiastic impulse, but guided by reason, and depending upon justice—the effective force of those who were regularly armed and fit for active service was considerably inferior*.—The conduct of the British parliament, however, had taught the Irish the value of political freedom, and the necessity of national unanimity—and therefore the whole popula-

* It is impossible with any accuracy to compute the number of effective volunteers who took up arms in Ireland—because many were enrolled who were incapable of duty, and many were nominally members of several corps, though only acting with one. The number on paper therefore vastly exceeded the effective force; nor is it probable that more than eighty thousand effective disciplined troops could have been brought into the field—until the arming became general—and the numbers increased by the admission of Catholics—when, had there been arms in the kingdom for all who were anxious to bear them, above four hundred thousand effectives certainly would have come forward.—In the rebellion of 1798, the county of Kildare alone had more than twenty-five thousand rebels in arms, and the county of Wexford above thirty thousand—and had the other counties furnished in proportion to their population, the amount would have exceeded six hundred thousand—but this comprised the Catholics, who were in very scanty numbers enrolled as volunteers in 1782.

tion were ready to be embodied if necessity required it—and in one month five hundred thousand active soldiers might have been enrolled for service. They saw clearly, that Great Britain, by the consolidation of her strength, had risen to that height of power, which alone protected her from her ambitious neighbours, and that, whilst she kept all her liberty at home, for her own consumption, she was able to exercise despotic authority over every other quarter of the world, which she had at all the power to govern.—It was therefore only by the same unanimity that Ireland could counteract her; and all the capacities and talents which the Irish people ever possessed, seemed to collect their united strength for the cause of their independence.

They had now, by the constant discussions of political subjects in every rank of society, acquired a capacity of acute reasoning on constitutional controversies—their native eloquence, breaking forth at every meeting, nourished their native ardor, and almost every peasant became a public orator*.—“Kings” (said a private volun-

* Eloquence was at that period highly estimated and universally cultivated in Ireland. The number of able men, who at that period filled the bar and the senate, had never been equalled at any former period. The flame of liberty seemed to communicate a glow to the language even of the humblest orator. The bar was not a trade; it was a profession, from which servility was excluded. The senate was not a bank; it was a lyceum where no base interest prevailed: eloquence flourished in both, and the most avaricious seemed at that moment to have almost forgotten their vicious propensity in their glory. To this may be added, that

teer at one of those provincial assemblies in Leinster) "are, we now
 " perceive, but human institutions—Parliaments are but human
 " institutions—Ministers are but human institutions;—but Liberty
 " is a right Divine—'tis the earliest gift from Heaven—the charter
 " of our birth-right, which human institutions can never cancel,
 " without tearing the first and best decree of the Omnipotent Cre-
 " ator."

The pulpit too, from which fanaticism was expelled, did not fail to become auxiliary to the general cause. Some dissenting clergymen in the north of Ireland were particularly eloquent: a passage in one of their sermons deserves to be recorded.

" My brethren and brother-soldiers," said the pastor, "let us, by
 " prayer, and by humiliation, supplicate Heaven to grant our at-
 " tainment of that liberty, without which life is but a prison, and
 " society a place of bondage. Our tutelary providence has per-
 " mitted that blessing to be so long withheld from us by the cor-
 " rupt and the unworthy, only as a punishment for our past
 " offences, and a trial for our future fortitude and perseverance.
 " But the time of our expiation seems now to have been com-

the students of the university, having access to the gallery of the parliament, their young minds became enlarged and enlightened by what they daily heard and admired, and were thus in train, by their patriotism and their imitative powers, to supply the place of declining veterans.—The change has been great and lamentable, but not difficult to be accounted for—and has only kept pace with the other revolutions of the world.

“pleted: a bright flame has blazed up amongst the people, and, in the hands of Justice, lights them to the plains of Virtue and of Victory. The justice of our cause has drawn down that flame from a superior Power, and we may well anticipate, that, through it’s fire, the priests of Baal will soon perish before the altars of the Almighty.”

Every political incident—every trait of national character—every exertion of natural talent—then combined in one common cause, to promote the objects of the Irish people:—whilst misfortunes abroad—despondency at home—factions in the parliament—dissensions in the ministry—poverty amongst the people—and the general want of courage and confidence, seemed to communicate to England every feature of a sinking state—and increased the power of Ireland in the same proportion that England lost it’s power.

Almost every Irish gentleman had now either raised a military corps, or had enlisted himself in that of his neighbour.—Some Roman Catholic gentlemen also took to arms, and raised corps composed solely of persons of that persuasion*—whilst many Protestants, relinquishing their prejudices, received their Catholic fellow-subjects into their ranks with cordiality, and the whole na-

* Sir William Dillon of Meath county was the first who raised a corps of volunteers composed solely of Catholics. He was a rough country gentleman, residing on his farm.—It was suspected, that government had encouraged his raising that regiment—as they knew they could

tion became almost as a single family.—The most profound peace and good conduct signalized the lowest peasantry—the most perfect and effectual police was established—hardly a public crime of any kind was committed without instant detection—and every man of every rank seemed to have adopted one prominent and permanent principle—that of uniting good order—patriotism—and firmness.

The love of liberty, however, is often palled by enjoyment:—the miseries of former oppression are sometimes forgotten in the views of avarice, or the pursuits of ambition—and there are too many instances in history, of sanguinary contests for the attainment of independence, and voluntary relapses into the fangs of tyranny. Human nature is subject to inconsistencies, and man cannot counteract the errors of his original formation: but when that inconsistency is the voluntary result of depraved or corrupted principles, the weakness becomes a vice, and the object disgusting. Nor can there be a stronger elucidation of this position, or a more painful

command him, and he could give a large body of Catholics their proper tone, and at least keep them out of harm's way.

But a corps called the Irish Brigade was raised in Dublin, which gave a good deal of uneasiness to government;—they were mostly Catholics—their uniform green—their numbers great—and their resolutions rather ardent. Many of its members were popular orators, and its extension might soon put it beyond control;—however, it remained quiet; and, by not meeting much opposition, soon dwindled away.

comparison of times and persons, than that which will occur in the progress of this Narrative, where we shall discover the very same men, who in seventeen-hundred-and-eighty-two were foremost in offering their lives and fortunes to attain the independence of their country, metamorphosed on the Union, eighteen years afterwards, into the veriest slaves of direct and shameless corruption—and publicly selling themselves, their connexions, and their country, for money—for office—or for title. The individual proofs of this are numerous—indisputable—and easily produced; and the comparison will afford a wholesome lesson for states and nations to look with more caution and less confidence on the professions of public men—who too frequently remain no longer honest, than till public opinion may safely be encountered by plausible pretences. The shouts of popularity only gratify the momentary vanity of man—whilst successful ambition rewards more substantially his pride—or fills the measure of his avarice. The instances are rare, and therefore more precious, of perfect purity attending public character, without deviation, through the whole course of it's career.

Of those who led the volunteer associations in Leinster—Lord Charlemont, the Duke of Leinster, Mr. Grattan, and Mr. Henry ^{Lord} ~~Hard~~, had the greatest weight and authority: their popularity was extreme—and it was merited.

To this list may be added the names of many others, particularly Archdell—Stewart—and Brownlow—names that will for ever re-

main engraved on the tablet of Irish gratitude—as belonging to men who remained steady during all the subsequent ordeals through which their unfortunate country was doomed to pass, and formed a striking and melancholy contrast to Altamont and Belvidere*—Shannon and Clanricard—Longfield and Nevil—and the crowd of those, whose apostasy, in 1800, has stained the records of Irish history, and tarnished the character of Irish patriotism.—A dereliction of public principle can only be accounted for by reflecting, that the accomplished politician and the polished patriot are no less susceptible of the debasing passions of the human mind, than the most humble and illiterate amongst uncultivated society. High rank and influence oftener expose the dormant errors, than multiply the virtues of a public character.

As soon as the Duncannon volunteers had received the concurrence of the armed associations, the commons house of parliament assumed a new aspect. Its former submission and humble adulation to the minister and the lord lieutenant appeared gradually departing—the old supporters of the government seemed only solicitous how they could diminish their obedience without

* There is not a more remarkable circumstance in the history of Irish versatility, than that of the Earl of Belvidere.—It is so striking, that the author, doubting if it would obtain credit on bare assertion, thought proper to give *written* documents publicity, as proof. Two *fac-similes*, in the former part of this work, leave no doubt as to the correctness of the author's observation: the one the hand-writing of his lordship, the other of his *member*.

sacrificing their connexion—and every successive debate showed evident symptoms of an approaching and decisive crisis.

The proceedings of the people without-doors, now, for the first time, began to have their due weight on their representatives within:—the whole house appeared forming into parties, accordingly as they were operated on by different degrees of caution—of timidity—of patriotism—and of interest—the leaders of each party became more conspicuous—and every question, however trivial, confessed the unsteadiness of the government, and betrayed the embarrassment of it's supporters.

Fitzgibbon, throughout, pursued an unvaried course. His haughty and inflexible mind despised the country which he hoped one day to govern. Her release from British domination might also liberate her from his own grasp—and he uniformly opposed every measure which might tend to her emancipation—save in a few instances, which, by exposing his duplicity, confirmed the opinion of the nation as to his character.—Perfectly indifferent as to the public, he every day gave fresh proofs of that arbitrary and impetuous talent, which so strongly contributed to bring the nation to it's end—and himself to his conclusion—and it sometimes occurred, that he embarrassed the government more by the intemperance of his support, than their opponents did by the steadiness of their opposition.

A variety of causes contributed to add both numbers and weight

to the opposition, and gained it especially the accession of many country gentlemen, whom the transactions of the moment had aroused from their lethargy, and who found it no longer possible either indolently to temporize, or to support those ministerial measures, which even their own tenantry in arms had resolved to resist: nor could they adopt a neutrality, which their country might reasonably consider as a concealed hostility. Several on this principle united with opposition. Meanwhile a few determined, as far as possible, to remain passive; but, doubtful of results, held themselves ready to join the strongest, and fall on the weakest party, when its discomfiture should be certain.

The party, who from office or connexion were necessitated to adhere to every measure of government—lowering the usual tone of arrogance and of triumph—condescended to give reasons for their conduct, and appeared almost to court a supposition, that this adherence was compulsory, and their conviction open; while the number was small of those who, looking to the possibility of a termination favourable to government, and their future interests, still gave them a support, the more acceptable, because now more necessary. But it was too late—temporizing was at an end—the mine was full—the train was laid—the match was burning—the summons was peremptory—and either surrender or explosion was inevitable.—At this moment the leading characters all started from their ranks:—every part had it's chief—and every chief turned

his eyes, by almost unanimous assent, to the eloquence and energy of the ardent Grattan. The favourite of the parliament—the terror of the minister—the intimate friend of the ablest men—and the indefatigable advocate of his country—he seemed most peculiarly calculated to bring forward some great or decisive measure, which should at once terminate the dangerous paroxysm to which the minds of the whole nation were now worked up, and by its decision inform them, whether they were to receive their rights from the justice, or to enforce them by the humiliation, of Great Britain.

The period, however, had not quite arrived for this step. Extensive as the abilities of Mr. Grattan were, they had many competitors: jealousies intrude themselves even into the highest minds;—the spirit of rivalry is inseparable from great talents;—Mr. Grattan's importance was merely individual*—and he was then only advancing to that pre-eminence, which he soon after acquired over all competitors. Though it was approaching fast, it was evident

* Mr. Grattan's father was an Irish barrister of eminence—recorder of Dublin, and member for that city. He died without the reputation of being either rich or patriotic: but left to Ireland the best legacy he could bequeath—one of the ablest, and certainly one of the purest public characters that ever it produced.

Mr. Henry Grattan was himself a barrister, but could make nothing of the pursuit:—his talents had a different turn—his mind was not sufficiently in detail, and his manner and language were totally unforensic:—he did better.

that it had not indisputably arrived :—it was essential that all those parties in the house should be a little more approximated, before a measure was announced on which unanimity was of vital importance.

So much talent never had before appeared in the Irish senate as at that particular moment ;—rank and fortune also were in higher estimation there, than in England, where both are more common, and consequently less imposing.—Eloquence and talents have always had their appropriate weight in a popular assembly ;—but several members of the Irish parliament, in addition to splendid talents, having great fortune and distinguished rank to recommend them*—the commons house was not as yet fully prepared to give so splendid a lead to any individual, who, devoid of these, had nothing to recommend him but his talents and his character.

* The number of peers was at this period not one third of the number they were afterwards increased to, through Mr. Pitt.—The country gentlemen were numerous—sturdy—whimsical—and independent—and as a headstrong and tolerably united body, no minister durst *directly* oppose them. Mr. Pitt found out the way to rid himself of that difficulty. When a country gentleman became too troublesome as a commoner, the lord lieutenant was instructed to offer him a peerage :—if *he* did not choose the honour, his *wife* did ; he was thus prevailed upon, as he thought, to elevate his family ; and was surprised to find that he had lost all his weight, when he imagined he was mightily increasing his importance. This being successfully practised for some years ; by degrees, traders—lawyers—nay attorneys, occasionally supplied the place of the country gentlemen ; and many of these generally gave the minister of the day very little more trouble than to answer one “ *civil question*.”

Those who led their respective parties were all men of eminent abilities or of extensive connexions. Flood—Grattan—Brownlow—Burgh—Daly—Yelverton—appeared the most respected or efficient leaders of the opposition;—Scott (the attorney-general) and Fitzgibbon were the most active and efficient supporters of government;—while ^{Barry}~~Bury~~—Bagenel—Sir Edward Newnham—Mr. Joseph Dear, and a number of country gentlemen, all dissimilar in habits, and very heterogeneous in principles, were grouped together without any particular leader—but always paid a marked deference to the opinions of Mr. Brownlow, whose good sense—large fortune—and reasonable efficiency, constantly procured him a merited attention.

Of the country gentlemen, some had a sort of exclusive privilege of speaking without interruption—whether what they spoke was good sense or folly—with reason or without—as suited their whims, or accorded with their capacities.—Of this class was Mr. Thomas Connolly, who appeared to have the largest personal connexion of any individual in the commons house of parliament, and was the foremost, always, in availing himself of that privilege. Like Mr. Bagenel—though from very different causes—he was allowed to say or do whatever he thought proper. He took a principal lead amongst the country gentlemen, because he spoke more than any of them, though probably his influence would have been greater, if he had remained totally silent.—He was a person of very high

family—ample fortune—powerful connexions—and splendid establishments ;—friendly—sincere—honourable—and munificent in disposition,—but whimsical—wrong-headed, and positive—his ideas of politics were limited and confused ;—he mistook obstinacy for independence—and singularity for patriotism—and fancied he was a Whig, because he was not professedly a Tory.

Full of aristocracy—he was used by the patriots, when they could catch him, to give weight to their resolutions—and courted by the government, to take advantage of his whimsicality, and embarrass the opposition.—He was bad as a statesman—worse as an orator—but as a sportsman he was pre-eminent. In parliament he gave his opinions at the close of a debate, without having listened to it's progress ; and attacked measures with a sort of blunt point, which generally bruised both his friends and his opponents. His qualities were curiously mixed, and his principles as singularly blended ;—and if he had not been distinguished by birth and fortune, he certainly would have remained all his life in obscurity.

This gentleman had an extensive circle of adherents. On some questions he was led away by their persuasions—on others, they submitted to his prejudices, as a bait to fix him on more important occasions ; and sometimes he differed unexpectedly from all of them. He was nearly allied to the Irish minister at the discussion of the Union—and he followed his lordship's fortunes—surrendered his country—lost his own importance—died in comparative obscurity—

and in his person ended the pedigree of one of the most respectable English families ever resident in Ireland*.

Many other persons, who distinguished themselves at this period of public trial, will be subjects of observation in the course of this memoir:—but scarcely any of them more justly deserve notice than Mr. Yelverton, who was, perhaps, the only public character of those days. Every act of his could be with ease accounted for—his motives for the act being as discoverable as the act was public;—and whether his conduct was right or wrong made no difference in this respect—it's causes could be traced with equal facility—and he generally struggled as little against the propensities of his nature as any man that ever existed. In this narrative of the concerns of Ireland his name will frequently occur; and so extraordinary a character can never be forgotten in the minds of his countrymen.

Barry Yelverton, afterward Lord Avonmore, and successor to Hussey Burgh, as chief baron of the exchequer, had acquired great celebrity as an advocate at the Irish bar, and was at this time rapidly winging his way to the highest pinnacle of honourable noto-

* His father was one of the highest characters among the country gentlemen, magnificent and respected. Mr. Thomas Connolly never did or would accept of any office: the art of governing him seemed to be, by inducing him to think that nobody could influence him:—in that he was mistaken.

riety and forensic advancement. He had been elected member of parliament for the town of Carrickfergus, and became a zealous partizan for the claims of Ireland.

It would be difficult to do justice to the lofty and overwhelming elocution of this distinguished man, during the early periods of his political exertions.—To the profound—logical—and conclusive reasoning of Flood ;—the brilliant—stimulating—epigrammatic antithesis of Grattan ;—the sweet-toned—captivating—convincing rhetoric of Burgh ;—or the wild fascinating imagery and varied pathos of the extraordinary Curran, he was respectively inferior ;—but in powerful, nervous language, he excelled them all. A vigorous—commanding—undaunted eloquence burst in torrents from his lips—not a word was lost.—Though fiery, yet weighty and distinct, the authoritative rapidity of his language, relieved by the figurative beauty of his luxuriant fancy, subdued the auditor without a power of resistance, and left him in doubt, whether it was to argument or to eloquence that he surrendered his conviction.

His talents were alike adapted to public purposes, as his private qualities to domestic society. In the common transactions of the world he was an infant ;—in the varieties of right and wrong, of propriety and error, a frail mortal ;—in the senate and at the bar, a mighty giant :—it was in the bench that, unconscious of his errors, and in his home, unconscious of his virtues, both were most conspi-

cuous. That deep-seated vice, which with equal power freezes the miser's heart, and inflames the ruffian's passions, was to him a stranger;—he was always rich—and always poor;—but though circumstances might sometimes have been his guide, avarice never was his conductor:—like his great predecessor, frugality fled before the carelessness of his mind—and left him the victim of his liberality, and of course in many instances a monument of ingratitude. His character was entirely transparent—it had no opaque qualities;—his passions were open—his prepossessions palpable—his failings obvious—and he took as little pains to conceal his faults as to publish his perfections.

In politics he was rather more steady to party, than to principle—but evinced no immutable consistency in either:—a patriot by nature, yet susceptible of seduction—a partizan by temper, yet capable of instability—the commencement and the conclusion of his political conduct were as distinct as the poles, and as dissimilar as the elements.

Amplly qualified for the bench by profound legal and constitutional learning—extensive professional practice—strong logical powers—a classical and wide-ranging capacity—equitable propensities, and a philanthropic disposition—he possessed all the positive qualifications for a great judge:—but he could not temporise;—the total absence of skilful or even necessary caution—and the indul-

gence of a few feeble counteracting habits—greatly diminished that high reputation, which a more cold phlegmatic mien—or a solemn—imposing—vulgar plausibility—often confers on miserably inferior characters.

As a judge, he certainly had some of those marked imperfections too frequently observable in judicial officers:—he received impressions too soon, and perhaps too strongly;—he was indolent in research—and impatient in discussion;—the natural quickness of his perception hurried off his judgment, before he had time to regulate it, and sometimes left his justice and his learning *idle spectators* of his reasons and his determination;—while extraneous considerations occasionally obtruded themselves upon his unguarded mind, and involuntarily led him away from the straight path of calm deliberation.

But the errors of talented and celebrated men are always more conspicuous, exaggerated and condemned, than those of inferior ones; and perhaps this severity is not altogether unjustifiable: the errors of dullness may be the errors of nature; those of talent have not the same apology. But even with all his faults Lord Avonmore's abilities were vastly superior to those of almost all his judicial contemporaries united. If he was impetuous, it was an impetuosity in which his heart had no concern;—he was never unkind, that he was not also repentant;—and ever thinking that he acted with rectitude,

the cause of his greatest errors seemed to be a careless ignorance of his lesser imperfections.

He had a species of intermitting ambition, which either led him too far, or forsook him altogether. His pursuits, of course, were unequal, and his ways irregular:—he sometimes forgot his objects, and frequently forgot himself. Elevated solely by his own talents—he acquired new habits without altogether divesting himself of the old ones—and there was scarcely a society so high, or a company so humble, that the instinctive versatility of his natural manners could not be adapted to either. A scholar—a poet—a statesman—a lawyer,—in elevated society he was a brilliant wit—at lower tables, a vulgar humourist:—he had appropriate anecdote and conviviality for all—and, whether in the one or in the other, he seldom failed to be either entertaining or instructive.

He was a friend, ardent, but indiscriminate even to blindness—an enemy, warm, but forgiving even to folly;—he lost his dignity by the injudiciousness of his selections—and sunk his consequence in the pliability of his nature;—to the first he was a dupe—to the latter an instrument:—on the whole, he was a more enlightened than efficient statesman—a more able, than unexceptionable judge,—and more honest in the theory, than the practice, of his politics. His rising-sun was brilliant—his meridian, cloudy—his setting, obscure:—crosses at length ruffled his temper—de-

ceptions abated his confidence—time tore down his talents—he became depressed and indifferent—and after a long life of chequered incidents and inconsistent conduct, he died, leaving behind him few men who possessed so much talent—so much heart—or so much weakness.

This distinguished man, at the critical period of Ireland's emancipation, burst forth as a meteor in the Irish senate: his career in the commons was not long—but it was busy and important;—he had connected himself with the duke of Rutland, ^{Portland} and continued that connexion uninterrupted till the day of his dissolution. But through the influence of that nobleman, and the absolute necessity of a family provision—on the question of the Union the radiance of his public character was obscured for ever—the laurels of his early achievements fell withered from his brow—and after having with zeal and sincerity laboured to attain independence for his country in 1782—he became one of it's sale-masters in 1800—and mingling in a motley crowd, uncongenial to his native character—and beneath his natural superiority—he surrendered the rights—the franchises—and the honours of that peerage, to which, by his great talents and his early virtues, he had been so justly elevated.

Except upon the bench, his person was devoid of dignity, and his appearance ordinary, and rather mean—yet there was some-

thing in the strong marked lines of his rough unfinished features, which bespoke a character of no common description;—powerful talent was it's first trait—fire and philanthropy contended for the next;—his countenance, wrought up and varied by the strong impressions of his labouring mind, could be better termed indicatory than expressive; and in the midst of his greatest errors and most reprehensible moments, it was difficult not to respect, and impossible not to regard him.

CHAP. VII.

The Alarm in England increases.—Mr. Grattan.—Further Observations on his Character.—He determines to move a Declaration of Rights in the Irish House of Commons.—The Earl of Carlisle recalled.—Observations on his Administration.—The Duke of Portland appointed Lord Lieutenant.—Sketch of his Character.—He attempts to procrastinate.—Remarks on the Policy of a Union at that Juncture.—Embarrassments of the Government.—Character of Mr. Sexton Perry.—Mr. Grattan refuses to delay his Proceedings, and moves a Declaration of Rights and Grievances in Parliament.—Extraordinary Effect of this Motion.—It passes unanimously.—Mr. Fitzgibbon's Conduct.—Mr. John Toler.—The Unanimity of the House disturbed by Mr. Fitzgibbon.—Debate on an Address to Lord Carlisle.—The Address carried.—Enthusiastic Rejoicings all over Ireland.—The Declaration of Independence the primary Cause of the Union.

AS the proceedings of the volunteers and municipal bodies became every day more serious and decisive—and the Irish house of commons, on the subserviency of which the British ministers had been so long accustomed to rely, assumed an unusual tone of independence—and evinced strong symptoms of an approaching revolution of sentiment—the British cabinet were alarmed for the consequences of further neglect, and at length reluctantly gave up all hopes of effectually resisting or evading the demands of Ireland;—they now only sought how they could best gain time for deliberation, so as to moderate the extent of their concessions—and adopt

a mode of conduct the least likely to humiliate the pride or alarm the jealousies of Great Britain.

But lord North's administration had been disgraced, and ruined through their proceedings towards America, and were, of course, equally unfit to negotiate with Ireland, as they must feel the same repugnance, as in the American case, to concede independence. With these ministers, therefore, it was found impracticable to proceed to such a measure—and they were at length necessarily displaced.—But though the administration was changed individually, they were still a British government, with the appropriate characteristics of the old leaven,—and could not so suddenly and radically alter the fundamental system of their predecessors, as plausibly to assume the appearance of a mere voluntary generosity towards Ireland—or conceal from the world the true motives which caused the change of sentiment in the English councils: in other words, it was altogether impossible effectually to mask the reluctance with which England must at length retract her favourite political doctrines—and the ill grace with which she must strike the flag of usurpation to an inferior nation.

In this state of things, as the earl of Carlisle could not act on measures which had been resisted by his colleagues—it became absolutely necessary, for the safety of the empire, to change the ministers of both nations,—and the appointment of the marquis of Rockingham and Mr. Fox, by calling to his majesty's councils as

much honesty and talent as could reasonably be expected, gave a new impulse to the machine of government, and increased the hopes, as it raised the spirits, of the Irish people.

The members of the new cabinet were well aware that the situation of Ireland was too critical to be for a moment neglected;—the great responsibility which that critical state imposed on their heads, impressed them with a full sense of the difficulties and the dangers they had undertaken to encounter; and whatever their private opinions might have been on the affairs of Ireland, they wisely adopted a full tone of pacific conciliation, and, professing the true Whig doctrines of constitutional liberty, they assumed the eccentric character of patriot-ministers:—an attribute but little known, and seldom found in any country.

These ministers were certainly disposed to act liberally, though probably to a narrower extent than what they soon found was indispensable to the integrity of the empire;—for even Mr. Fox had never proved himself to be a very attached friend to the interests of Ireland, further than he was led by his general principles of toleration and liberty;—and so inattentive had he been to the concerns of that nation in the abstract, that a few days after his appointment, he fairly acknowledged himself ignorant* of its true state, and uninformed as to its real circumstances.

* Mr. Fox, on the 4th of April 1782, wrote to a nobleman in Ireland in these words:—
“With regard to the particular *points* between the two countries—I am really not master of

Their first step, however, was politic and laudable :—they determined to send over to Ireland a nobleman of high rank, whose character was popular, and whose principles were conciliatory—and thereby skilfully give the colouring of generous consideration to

them, *sufficiently to discuss them* : but I can say in *general*, the new ministry have no other wish than to settle them in the way that may be most for the real advantage of *both* countries, whose interests cannot be *distinct*."

Mr. Fox's high and pure principles of constitutional liberty generally led him to wish an extension of that blessing to Ireland, in *common* with other portions of the empire ;—but he never appeared to have felt any *abstract* predilection for that country—or to have taken any pains to inform himself of it's situation :—he simply wished to do it justice, as far as the interests of England permitted—on the idea that the interests of *both* could not be *distinct*.—In point of constitutional and of collective strength, Mr. Fox was right—but, as to commerce and monopoly, he was wrong—and the *latter* being the favourite object of the British nation, and pursued by it with a velocity that actually blinds the pursuers to every thing, except the game they have in view,—he was totally mistaken in supposing the British nation would not consider the general interests of England and Ireland on the *latter* points, as not only not *incapable* of distinctness—but radically distinct.—The fallacy of Mr. Fox's diction was *proved* two years afterwards, on the commercial propositions, and every subsequent year, whenever the manufactures or commerce of Great Britain and Ireland came into collision.—The Irish distilleries *since* the Union have been a strong example of this system—and have proved that the increase of revenue in Ireland, and it's consequent increased ability to contribute it's quota to the public expenditure, has been postponed by some ministers to the individual benefit of the British rectifiers—directly contrary to the spirit, and, it is asserted, to the very letter, of the articles of union. This has been urged in the Imperial parliament unsuccessfully.

measures, which, in fact, were substantially requisite:—for there was not a British minister, if his real sentiments had been known—whatever his affected language might have been—who did not consider the intended concessions as the necessary result of an imperious necessity;—existing circumstances had left them no choice—and the duke of Portland was properly selected lord lieutenant for Ireland, as a fair—honest—moderate whig—too temperate and discreet to initiate faction, and sufficiently plausible to soften down the asperity of parties, by insinuating on every occasion the friendly views of the new cabinet, and the kind condescension of his majesty himself, in acceding to claims, which, in more prosperous days, his ministers had uniformly and haughtily rejected.

On the 14th of April, 1782, the duke of Portland arrived to take upon himself the government of Ireland, to the great satisfaction of that nation—and the earl of Carlisle departed, leaving behind him strong impressions both of individual respect and popular disapprobation.—However friendly and honourable the earl's disposition towards the Irish nation might have been, his administration had effected nothing permanently advantageous, either to the country—to the minister—or to his own reputation. The Portugal business had lost him the confidence of the people, and he left Ireland alive to all her grievances—completely awakened from her slumber—and no longer amenable to that narrow and mistaken policy, by which

she had been so long kept down, rather than governed—and in the exercise of which the earl's administration had been by no means deficient.

The duke of Portland, on his arrival, found the nation in a state in which neither procrastination nor evasion was any longer practicable. The spirit of independence had arisen to it's highest pitch;—the parliament, no longer the vassals of the British government or of their own, stood boldly determined to support the people:—to reclaim them to their old subjection was impossible—to corrupt them anew was impracticable—and a dissolution would have increased the numbers, and added tenfold strength to the power, of the patriots.

The duke therefore had but one course to take—to proceed as calmly, deliberately, and slowly, as circumstances would admit of—and endeavour, if possible, to contract the number of concessions which the Irish nation were disposed to insist on. But to effect this object he was incompetent;—he was not a man of deep talent—and though he was not altogether deficient in that species of diplomatic ambiguity, and plausible equivocation, which are supposed to constitute a necessary part of a modern minister's education—yet he had not enough of those qualifications to carry difficult objects, by the skill of dissimulation—or ingenuity sufficient to defeat, by negotiation, measures which he had not the power of openly resisting.—He was accounted a plain—fair—well-meaning and rather

high-minded man—and had the peculiar advantage of being the first credible messenger of intended justice from the British government to the Irish people.

The courtesy of the Irish house of peers to so elevated a nobleman, combined with their courtly habits to all former chief governors, procured him a considerable strength in that assembly ;—but he found the house of commons quite beyond his grasp.—The yoke, on their part, was completely thrown off—nor could all his influence rally around his government a sufficient number of that house to support him in any one measure of delay or equivocation. He, therefore, pursuant to his instructions from the British cabinet, endeavoured, by personal application and interviews with the leading members of parliament and country gentlemen of the greatest influence, to gain a little time for deliberation :—but he found the determination of Ireland already so very general, and so far matured—and the volunteer determinations so unalterably decided on—that there appeared to be hardly an alternative, between immediate acquiescence, or inevitable revolution.

Whilst the duke remained in this painful dilemma, irresolute as to his conduct, the important crisis was rapidly approaching, and the very first day of the meeting of parliament portended extraordinary events, not likely to diminish the extent of his embarrassment.

Exclusive of the distinguished personages already mentioned,

many other eminent men were daily emerging from the general body of the commons, whose talents and eloquence, catching the flame which surrounded them, soon added to that brilliant light, which illuminated the whole nation.—But the public eye still kept steadfastly fixed on Mr. Grattan, as the person best qualified to take the lead in asserting the rights and independence of his country. The style and fire of his eloquence—the integrity of his character—the indefatigable perseverance of his patriotism—and an intrepid fortitude of spirit—which had always great weight with the Irish—procured him a consideration far above his cotemporaries—in none of whom were these grand qualities so generally united;—whilst a kind heart—and the mild, unassuming, playful manners of a gentleman, secured to him that sort of private esteem, which banishes the feelings of rivalry even from the most zealous partizans.—Thus, as if by general assent, at the time of the duke of Portland's assuming the government, was Mr. Grattan considered by all ranks as the chosen champion for the independence of Ireland—distinguished by the most elevated characters—admired by the parliament—and idolized by the people.

Immediately before the duke of Portland's arrival, Mr. Grattan had prepared, and determined to move, a general declaration of rights in the house of commons; and it must have been an object of the utmost importance to the duke, either to prevent that measure altogether, or obtain at least it's postponement until he became

better acquainted with the disposition of the principal persons of the country—the full extent of their views—and how far he might be able to assuage the general irritation, without going the full length of their extensive requisitions. It was also of importance to the credit of his administration, that, if possible, he should have the substance of whatever he was authorised to accede to, made known by anticipation, as the liberal act of his government, through his English secretary—rather than brought forward, as the demand of the people, through their Irish advocate. Under these circumstances, an adjournment of parliament was a most desirable object, and he determined to attempt it through the negotiation of Mr. Fitzpatrick, who was at least as sincere a man as his noble employer, and had always expressed himself strongly in favour of the interests of Ireland.

The duke also felt the great importance of a little breathing-time after his arrival; and both Mr. Fox and lord Rockingham exerted themselves to obtain* that object from the Irish patriots; and

* The marquis of Rockingham wrote to lord Charlemont, immediately on his appointment, thus: "I should hope, an adjournment of the house of commons in Ireland for a fortnight or three weeks, in order to give the duke of Portland an opportunity of inquiring into the opinions of your lordship and the gentlemen of the *first weight and consequence*, will be readily assented to. I cannot think that it would be good policy in the house of commons of Ireland to carry on measures at this juncture, which should appear as measures to *extort* &c. &c."

Nothing can more decidedly prove the justness of the previous observations on the disposition of the British ministers than this letter.—The adjournment the writer proposes was, in

under the circumstances in which his grace stood, it might have supposed that it would have been granted without much hesitation;—and in common times and cases it certainly would have been but just, and even in the existing one did not seem altogether unreasonable;—for, in fact, did not every thing promise a harvest of benefits from the new administration?—The avowed and proved enemies of Ireland had retired from office. In their stead, at the head of the government, was the marquis of Rockingham—as a man, most excellent—as a statesman, constitutional—honest—liberal:—as secretary of state, Mr. Fox, on the admirable nature of whose public principles eulogium would be surplusage:—and for the management of the affairs of Ireland, the duke of Portland, ac-

fact, to enable the duke of Portland to *feel the pulse* of “*gentlemen of rank and consequence*,”—not a word is said of the nation in general; and his lordship’s dread, lest the English people might think that their ministers would submit to any measures appearing to be “*extorted*,” fully proves his lordship’s real opinions and delicacy on that head, and gives strong reasons to question the limited extent of the concessions the British cabinet were then prepared to assent to, and their supposition, that through negotiations with the “*gentlemen of rank and consequence*,” they might be enabled somewhat to counteract the more extensive views of the people, and the better reconcile the English nation to those concessions.—Though this mental reservation certainly did justify the duke of Portland and others in their assertions, that the arrangement of 1782 was not *intended* to be conclusive—it can never justify their duplicity in deceiving the Irish nation by declaring it’s finality—or their unwarrantably, as ministers, putting words into the mouth of his majesty, respecting which they afterwards avowed their own insincerity:—yet such will afterwards appear to be exactly the case.

accompanied by colonel Fitzpatrick.—A more propitious beginning could hardly be expected;—nor could England furnish many men, on whose tolerating dispositions the Irish nation had more reason to repose. But still it could not be forgotten, that they were all Englishmen—and though naturally munificent, honourable, and conciliatory; yet necessarily partaking in some degree of those inherent prejudices, which education favours and habits confirm in English minds, unacquainted with the state of their sister-country—and who therefore would of course be cautious of committing themselves with the one country, by too precipitate and favourable a change of system towards the other.—Men the most enlightened on general principles are frequently found feeble on abstract subjects;—and Mr. Fox was excusable in his wariness of adopting sudden determinations, repugnant to the theories and practice of all former ministers and former parliaments of Great Britain.

In conformity to this principle, every proper preliminary step was taken by the new ministry, to prepare their nation for measures towards Ireland which never were, and never could be, popular in England;—and with a view to anticipate the expected proceedings of the Irish parliament, a message was delivered from the king to the British parliament on the 18th of April, 1782, stating, “That mistrusts and jealousies had arisen in Ireland, and that it was highly necessary to take the same into immediate consideration, in order to a *final* adjustment.”—This message from the king,

when coupled with the address of the British parliament to his majesty in reply, expressive of "their entire and cheerful concurrence in his majesty's views of a *final* adjustment"—if they are to be understood in the plain and unequivocal meaning of words, and construction of sentences, clearly import—the conjoint sentiments of both the British king and British parliament to proceed to a *final* adjustment of all differences between the two countries:—and this message and reply are here more particularly alluded to, because they form one of the principal points, afterwards relied upon in the Irish parliament, as decisive against any agitation of the question of a Union.—The words, *final adjustment*, so unequivocally expressed by his majesty, were immediately acted upon by the parliaments of both nations;—and the adjustment, which took place in consequence of the message, was considered by the contracting parties as decisively conclusive and final—as intended to be an indissoluble compact, mutually and definitively ratified by the two nations.

The measure of a Union, therefore, being proposed, and afterwards carried against the will of the people—by the power and through the corruption of the executive authority—after the complete ratification of that contract, and after it had been acted upon for seventeen years, was considered by the Irish people as a direct infringement of that final adjustment—a breach of national faith—an infraction of that constitutional federative compact solemnly

enacted by the mutual concurrence of the king, lords, and commons, of Great Britain—and the king, lords, and commons, of Ireland, in their joint and several legislative capacities.

This message, therefore, forms a predominant circumstance, as applying to the most important subsequent occurrences between the two nations ;—and as such should be kept in mind through every event detailed in this memoir.—It also leads to some considerations, which, though they may be considered as a digression from the transactions which immediately took place in consequence of the message, are yet of considerable utility in elucidating the respective situation of the two countries, at the time this final adjustment was proposed by the king—and the sense that his majesty's ministers, eighteen years afterwards, were pleased to give to the word *final*—when they conceived it necessary to argue that it bore, not a positive, but an inconclusive import, and could only be construed as giving an indefinite scope for future negotiation.

Previous to the year 1780, the distressed state of Ireland—the law of Poyning—the 6th of George the First—the standing army under a permanent mutiny bill—the dependence of the judges—the absence of the Habeas Corpus act—the restraints on commerce, and the deprivation of a constitution, had often suggested, to some of the best friends of Ireland, the idea of a complete incorporation of that country with Great Britain, as the only remedy for its accumulated and accumulating grievances and oppressions—as the

most advantageous measure which could be obtained for Ireland under it's then deplorable circumstances ;—and about the year 1753 and subsequently several pamphlets of considerable merit were published on the subject, detailing the advantages which Ireland must necessarily have derived from so close and beneficial a connexion.

As Ireland was then—trampled upon—oppressed—and put down without the power of resistance—or any probable chance of ever obtaining justice—there can be no doubt that almost any change must have been beneficial ; and, in that point of view, a complete union of the two nations would then have been, in many respects, extremely fortunate for that ruined country.—The British parliament had declared itself paramount to that of Ireland ;—and it was better to be governed by a joint—though a disproportioned—than a foreign legislature. The Irish parliament, besides, tired of ineffectual struggles for even the name of independence, had become indifferent to it's fate, and sunk into a state of lassitude and debility, from which, though it was occasionally roused by the sharp stings of oppression, it soon relapsed into it's old apathy—partly through despair and partly through corruption—while the people, kept systematically ignorant, and of course having but little public mind, and less public information, were naturally indifferent to the existence of a representative assembly, of which they neither felt the honour nor experienced the utility.

But at that period England was too powerful, too jealous, and

too haughty, to equalize her constitution and her commerce, with what she considered as a conquered, prostrate country. She had then no object to obtain from a captive, who lay groaning at her feet—picking up the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.—The prejudiced, contracted, and fallacious views which England then took of the state of Ireland, deceived her as to her own interests, connected with the general strength and prosperity of the whole empire—and every idea of an incorporate union with Ireland was rejected with disdain by the British nation.—England had united herself with Scotland to avoid the chance of a total separation—which it was more than probable might otherwise have been the consequence of distinct dynasties:—*—but the state of Ireland and the nature of her federal connexion with England occasioned no risque of such an event—and therefore created no such uneasiness or necessity—and the idea seemed to have been totally relinquished by both countries;—by the one, because she was too haughty and

* There never was so fallacious an attempt at reasoning, as assimilating the necessity of a Scotch and that of an Irish union. It is astonishing how extremely ignorant and ill-informed the English nation were upon that subject in 1800. The constitutions of Ireland and Scotland, and the nature of their relative connexions with England, had no point of similarity whatsoever—the *constitution* of their parliaments no resemblance at all;—the crowns of England and Scotland had only—by the common laws of descent—*happened* to be united in one person, viz. James the First—and would cease to be united, whenever the legal descendants of that succession ceased;—and on the death of queen Mary and king William

avaricious to grant—by the other, because she was too poor and too dejected to obtain, so advantageous an arrangement.

But when Ireland, by the causes heretofore detailed, had been awakened to a sense of her own strength—and a knowledge of her own resources;—when America had shown her the example of perseverance, and the possibility of obtaining justice—every idea of annexation to England vanished like the passing wind;—liberty was attainable—prosperity must follow liberty—and, in 1782, there was scarcely an Irishman, who would not have sooner sunk under the ruins of his country, than submit to a measure, which, a few years before, was an object, if not of desire, at least of indifference.—England too late perceived it's error—a union in 1753 would have effectually ended all claims of an independent constitution, by Ireland, in 1782—and would have been an object of the highest importance to Great Britain:—but now it was a word she durst not even articulate—the very sound of it would have been equal to a declaration of hostility—and however indisposed the new ministers of

without issue, the duke of Hamilton would have become the king of Scotland *de jure*:—a union therefore was indispensable to secure the connexion:—but Ireland had by mutual covenant *for ever* identified her king with the king of England, let the crown of that nation be worn (*de facto*) by whom it might—and no *distinct* succession *de jure* ever could exist.—On a discussion of this point, in the subsequent parts of this memoir, it will appear clearly, that not the most *remote* assimilation of circumstances existed between Scotland and Ireland, so as to justify any arguments in favour of one union by referring to the other.

England might have been to admit all the claims of Ireland, the words "final adjustment"—so emphatically used by his majesty—left no room to suppose that a union could be in contemplation, or ever afterwards be insisted on :—and yet it is singular, that the very same words—"final adjustment"—were repeated—by the Irish minister, when a union was proposed to the Irish parliament in 1800 for it's consideration.

So many arguments afterwards arose from that expression—so many sophistical constructions were placed on his majesty's message—so much duplicity did his ministers attribute to his language—that it is impossible to believe that all the ministers of that day were unreservedly sincere, as to the finality of the arrangement made with Ireland under it's then commanding attitude—and reminds us of one very remarkable truism of Irish history, That no compact or capitulation had ever before been entered into between the two countries, that had not been infringed or attempted to be infringed by England—when her power enabled her, or her interest seduced her, to withdraw from her engagements.

It is not my intention here to affirm, that the British government was altogether insincere in it's friendly disposition as expressed towards Ireland at the time ;—but on a fair review of the subsequent conduct of many individuals who composed that government, it is clear that their sincerity was more than dubious—and, like many other public measures of great utility to a people, that the conces-

sions of the British cabinet in 1782, formed a motley act—the result, partly of justice and policy—partly of compulsion—and partly of hostility and a spirit of contradiction towards the conduct of their predecessors—and not the fruit of a distinct—pure—unadulterated—constitutional disposition of good will towards the Irish nation.

Nothing can more clearly elucidate this supposition than the public conduct of the duke of Portland. In 1782, he came to Ireland to propose and consummate a *final* adjustment between the two nations, and, in pursuance of such proposal, a final adjustment was apparently effected—passed by the parliaments of both nations—confirmed by the honor of Great Britain—and sanctified by the faith of majesty.—The duke of Portland was the proposer and accredited agent of that final adjustment—the responsible minister of both nations for its completion—the official voucher of its perpetuity—and therefore should have been the guardian of that independence, which was effected through himself and declared by him, as viceroy, to be final and conclusive.

Yet, in 1800, the same duke of Portland is found retracing all his former steps—recanting his Irish creed—demolishing that independence of which he was the guardian—falsifying his own words, and equivocating on those of his sovereign to both parliaments—and arguing upon an incongruity, never yet paralleled, namely, that the words “final” and “inconclusive” were synonymous

in politics :—for upon no other principle could his grace's first and latter conduct be explained or justified.

It is impossible therefore to give the duke the merit of unqualified sincerity towards Ireland in 1782. The altered state of Ireland in 1800, was made the solitary but fallacious pretence for dissolving a solemn bond—breaking the ties of national faith—and diminishing the character of royal consistency.

The duke was obliged to meet the Irish parliament within two days after his arrival :—those days were employed in endeavouring to procure an adjournment of the house—and several confidential communications took place between him, Mr. Grattan, and others, who had determined not to admit the delay of a single hour. The duke's arrival in Ireland had been preceded by letters from the marquis of Rockingham and Mr. Fox to the earl of Charlemont, requesting an adjournment of parliament for three weeks, and expressing their conviction that the request would be immediately acceded to.—Nothing could more clearly prove their ignorance of the state of Ireland. All the influence of the crown could not have adjourned the commons for a single day. The people were too impatient for any procrastination. By adjournment, the parliament would have lost it's character, and the members their influence—anarchy would have been the inevitable result—and instead of a placid, constitutional, parliamentary declaration of rights, a recess

would probably have occasioned popular declarations of a more alarming tendency. For every reason therefore an adjournment, though, superficially considered, it seemed an object of importance to government, might have ended in measures greatly to their disadvantage.

The reasons for declining all delay were communicated to the duke of Portland by Mr. Grattan—and the duke, though not convinced, having no power of resistance, was passive on a proceeding which he could not encounter.

Mr. Grattan also, previously to proposing his measure to parliament, fairly submitted the intended declaration of rights to the duke; but it was rather too strong and too peremptory for his grace's approbation. He durst not however say he would oppose—and yet could not say he would support it;—but he proposed amendments, which would have effectually destroyed the vigor and narrowed the compass of these resolutions—and recommended modifications, which would have neutralized its firmness.—Mr. Grattan declined any alteration whatever—and the duke remained doubtful, whether his friends would accede to or resist it—and it is more than probable he was himself at the same moment equally irresolute as to his own future conduct:—he had no time to communicate with England—and his only resource was that of fishing for the support of eminent persons in both houses of parliament,—in the hope being able, in

modifying, to moderate by their means the detailed measures which would follow the declaration.

Whilst the chief governor was thus involved in perplexity and doubt, every step was taken by the advocates of independence to secure the decisive triumph of Mr. Grattan's intended declaration.—Whoever has individually experienced the sensations of ardent expectation—trembling suspense—burning impatience—and determined resolution—and can suppose all those sensations possessing an entire nation, may form some, but yet an inadequate idea of the feelings of the Irish people on the 16th of April, 1782,—which was the day peremptorily fixed by Mr. Grattan for moving that declaration of rights, which was the proximate cause of Ireland's short-lived prosperity, and the remote one of it's final overthrow and annexation. So high were the minds of the public wound up on the eve of that momentous day, that the volunteers flew to their arms without having an enemy to encounter—and, almost breathless with impatience, enquired eagerly after the probability of events, which the close of the same day must certainly determine.

It is difficult for any persons, but those who have witnessed the awful state of expected revolutions and of popular commotion, to describe the interesting moments which preceded the meeting of the Irish parliament;—and it is equally impossible to describe the no less interesting conduct of the Irish volunteers on that trying occa-

sion.—Had the parliament rejected Mr. Grattan's motion, no doubt could exist in the minds of those who were witnesses to the temper of the times—that the connexion with England would have been shaken to it's very foundation:—yet the most perfect order and decorum were observed by the armed associations, who paraded in every quarter of the city.—Though their own ardor and impatience were great, they wisely discouraged any manifestation of the same warm feelings amongst the lower orders of the people—and though they were resolved to lose the last drop of their blood to obtain the independence of their country, they acted as preservers of the peace, and by their exertions effectually prevented the slightest interruption of public tranquillity:—the awe of their presence restrained every symptom of popular commotion.

Early on the 16th of April 1782, the great street before the house of parliament was thronged by a multitude of people—of every class—and of every description—though many hours must elapse before the house would meet, or business be proceeded on.—As it was a circumstance which seldom takes place on the eve of remarkable events, it becomes a proper subject of remark, that though more than twenty thousand people, inflamed by the most dangerous zeal, were assembled in a public street—without any guide, restraint, or control, save the example of the volunteers—not the slightest appearance of tumult was observable:—on the contrary, such perfect order prevailed, that not even an angry word or offensive expression

escaped their lips.—Nothing could more completely prove the good disposition of the Dublin populace, than this correctness of demeanour, at a time when they had been taught—that the very existence of their trade and manufactures—and consequently the future subsistence of themselves and their families—was to be decided by the conduct of their representatives that very evening ;—and it was gratifying to see, that those who were supposed or even proved to have been their decided enemies, were permitted to pass through this immense assemblage, without receiving the slightest token of incivility, and with the same ease as those who were known to be their determined friends.

The parliament had been summoned to attend this momentous question by an unusual and special call of the house ; and by four o'clock a full meeting took place.—The body of the house of commons was crowded with it's members—a great proportion of the peerage attended as auditors—and the capacious gallery, which surrounded the interior magnificent dome of the house, contained above four hundred ladies of the highest distinction, who partook of the same national fire which had enlightened their parents, their husbands, and their relatives—and by the sympathetic influence of their presence and zeal communicated an instinctive chivalrous impulse to eloquence and to patriotism.

Those who have only seen the ^{Louvre} ~~other~~ apartment of the British and imperial parliaments, in the antiquated chapel of St Stephen's,

crowned by a gallery of note-takers, anxious to catch the public penny by the earliest publication of good speeches made worse, and bad speeches made better—indifferent as to subjects and careless as to misrepresentation—yet the principal medium of communication between the sentiments of the representative and the curiosity of the represented—can form no idea of the splendid and interesting appearance of the Irish house of commons on this occasion. The cheerful and imposing magnificence of its architecture—the number and brilliance of the anxious auditory—the vital question that night to be determined, and the solemn dignity with which the uncertainty of the result had clothed the proceedings of that awful moment—collectively produced impressions, even on disinterested strangers, which perhaps had never been so strongly or so justly excited by the appearance and proceedings of any house of legislature.

Mr. Sexton Perry* then occupied the speaker's chair;—a person in whose integrity the house, the nation, and the government reposed the greatest confidence;—a man in whose pure character, spirit, dignity, independence of mind, and honesty of principle were eminently conspicuous;—decisive—constitutional—patriotic—discreet

* Mr. Perry was the son of a gentleman of business in Limerick, and had been called to the Irish bar, where he practised with considerable reputation and success. He was not a distinguished orator in parliament, but few men ever sat in that house more personally respected by all parties. He was chosen speaker on Mr. Ponsonby's resignation, and his brother appointed a bishop some time after. Mr. Perry was uncle to the present earl of Limerick, on whom his estates have descended;—and it has been remarked, that there seldom

—he was every thing that became his office, and every thing that became himself. He had been a barrister in extensive practice at the time of his elevation,—and to the moment of his death he never departed from the line of rectitude, which marked every step of his progress through life, whether in a public or private station.—Mr. Perry took the chair at four o'clock. The singular wording of the summonses had it's complete effect, and procured the attendance of almost every member resident within the kingdom. A calm but deep solicitude was apparent on almost every countenance, when Mr. Grattan entered, accompanied by Mr. Brownlow and several others, the determined and important advocates for the declaration of Irish independence.—Mr. Grattan's preceding exertions and anxiety had manifestly injured his health;—his tottering frame seemed barely sufficient to sustain his labouring mind, replete with the unprecedented importance and responsibility of the measure he was about to bring forward. He was unacquainted with the reception it would obtain from the connexions of the government;—he was that day irretrievably to commit his country with Great Britain—and through him Ireland was either to acquire her liberty—or,

appeared two public characters more dissimilar in their politics than the uncle and nephew. The latter received an earldom, and was chosen a representative peer on the Union;—his son, lord Glentworth, professes and seems inclined to follow the public line of his grand-uncle, rather than of his father, and has shown some early and strong symptoms of tolerating and liberal principles, and very considerable public talent.—The political character of the family requires some regeneration.

which might be the contrary result, relinquish the connexion. His own situation was tremendous—that of the members attached to the administration embarrassing—that of the people anxious to palpitation.—For a short time a profound silence ensued:—it was expected that Mr. Grattan would immediately rise—when the wisdom and discretion of the government gave a turn to the proceedings, which in a moment eased the parliament of it's solicitude—Mr. Grattan of the weight that oppressed him—and the people of their anxiety.—Mr. Hely Hutchinson rose.—He said, that his excellency the lieutenant had ordered him to deliver a message from the king, importing, that—“His majesty, being concerned to find that discontent and jealousies were prevailing amongst his loyal subjects of Ireland, upon matters of great weight and importance, recommended to the house to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to effect such a *final* adjustment as might give satisfaction to both kingdoms.”—And Mr. Hutchinson accompanied this message with a statement of his own views on the subject—and his determination to support a declaration of Irish rights—and constitutional independence.

Notwithstanding this official communication, the government members were still greatly perplexed how to act. Mr. Grattan's intended declaration of independence was too strong, decisive, and prompt, to be relished as the measure of any government:—it could neither be wholly resisted, nor generally approved of, by the vice-

roy.—His secretary, colonel Fitzpatrick, was not yet in parliament ;—all modification whatsoever had been rejected by Mr. Grattan and his friends ;—and it is generally believed, that the members of the government went to parliament that day without any decided plan or system—but determined to regulate their own individual conduct by the circumstances which might occur, and the general disposition indicated by the majority of the house in the course of the proceedings.

Thus, on the sixteenth of April, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two—after seven hundred years of subjugation, oppression, and misery—after centuries of unavailing complaint, and neglected remonstrance—did the king of Ireland, through his Irish secretary of state, at length himself propose to redress those grievances through his Irish parliament ;—an authority which, as king of England, his minister had never before recognised or admitted.—In a moment the whole scene was completely changed ;—those miserable prospects which had so long disgusted, and at length so completely agitated the Irish people, vanished from their view ;—the phenomenon of such a message had an instantaneous and astonishing effect—and pointed out such a line of conduct to every party and to every individual, as left it almost impossible for any but the most mischievous characters, to obstruct the happy unanimity which now became the gratifying result of this prudent and wise proceeding.

Mr. Hutchinson, however, observed in his speech, that he was not officially authorized to say more,—than simply to deliver the message:—he was therefore silent as to all details—and pledged the government to none;—the parliament would act upon the message as to themselves might seem advisable.—Another solemn pause now ensued—Mr. Grattan remained silent—when Mr. George Ponsonby* rose—and, after eulogising the king, the British minister, and the Irish government, simply proposed a humble address in reply, “thanking the king for his goodness and condescension, and assu-

* Mr. George Ponsonby was the second son of Mr. John Ponsonby, who had resigned the speaker's chair on a difference of opinion with lord Townsend, and is the same Mr. G. Ponsonby who at present holds so eminent a station in the imperial parliament.—He was generally a leader in the Irish parliament on the popular side, and a determined and most able advocate against the Union. He was appointed lord chancellor of Ireland by the duke of Bedford, but resigned that office on the succession of the duke of Richmond; and in the transactions of Ireland, from the year 1782, he took a very distinguished and patriotic part, down to the very day the annexation of Ireland was consummated.—His actions are very much connected with the history of Ireland—and his public character added greatly to the character of his country.—Lord Clare (Fitzgibbon) and Mr. Ponsonby were at one time very intimate friends, but the dissimilarity of their dispositions and manners was so extreme, that the intimacy could not possibly continue;—a public breach was the result, which was never afterwards reconciled.—Lord Clare had affected to befriend Mr. Ponsonby on his out-set at the bar, for the purpose of enlisting so respectable an auxiliary for his own purposes;—but finding Mr. Ponsonby too proud to be his instrument, and too able to be his second, he took an opportunity of disgusting that gentleman by boasting of his own services and Mr. Pon-

ring his majesty that his faithful commoners would immediately proceed upon the great objects he had recommended to their consideration."

This uncircumstantial reply, however, fell very short of the expectation of the house, or the intentions of Mr. Grattan. On common occasions it would have answered the usual purposes of incipient investigation;—but the subject of Irish grievances required no committee to investigate—no protracted debates for further discussion. The claims of Ireland were already well known to the king and to his ministers; they had been recorded by the Dunganon convention; and now only required a parliamentary adoption in terms too explicit to be misconstrued—and too peremptory to be rejected. It is true, the good intentions of his majesty were announced—the favourable disposition of his cabinet communicated—a general redress of discontents and jealousies proposed;—but nothing specific was vouched, or even alluded to;—the present favourable government might be displaced, and the king's conceding intentions changed by a change of ministers—and Ireland thus

sonby's ingratitude:—the breach becoming public, Mr. Ponsonby had occasion to allude to it in the house of commons, and he introduced on the occasion the old words:—

"To John I owed great obligation:

But John has lately thought it fit

To publish it to all the nation;

So John and I are more than quit."

be again committed with Great Britain under circumstances of diminished strength, and more difficult adjustment—every man perceived the crisis—but no man could foresee the result—a decisive step appeared inevitable—but without great prudence that step might be destructive—popular impetuosity generally defeats its own objects—the examples of European history in all ages have proved, that rash or premature efforts to shake off oppression, generally confirmed it—or rent the chains of slavery from the grasp of one ruler only to transfer them with stronger rivets to the power of a successor.—It is less difficult to throw off the trammels of a tyrannic government, than to secure the preservation of a new gained liberty—and in cold and phlegmatic nations (where the sublime principles of political freedom were less investigated or less valued than in Ireland at this enlightened epoch,) more comprehensive powers might be entrusted to the prudence of the people, or delegated to the guardianship of chosen chieftains—but in an ardent nation, distinguished more for its talents and its enthusiasm, than for its steadiness or its foresight—where every man fostered his heated feelings, and the appetite for liberty was whetted even to voracity by the slavery of ages—hasty or violent proceedings, however they might for a moment appear to promote a rescue of the country from existing evils, would probably plunge it still deeper into unforeseen and more deplorable misfortunes—visionary men and visionary measures are never absent from such political struggles—

but if the delusive phrensy of Eutopian speculations gets wing amongst a people, it surely becomes the ablest auxiliary and most plausible pretext to oppressive governments, and the most certain and destructive enemy to the attainment of rational and constitutional liberty—and at this important crisis, had one rash step unfortunately committed Ireland and Great Britain in hostile struggle, the contest would have ended certainly in the destruction of one country, and probably of both. *Brk*

These and other discreet considerations had great weight, and excited great embarrassments, amongst the leading members in the Irish parliament—different characters of course took different views of this intricate subject—strength of intellect—courage—cowardice—interest—ignorance—or information—naturally communicated their correspondent impressions—and but few persons seemed entirely to coincide on the specific limits to which these popular proceedings might advance with safety.

Mr. Grattan had long declared the absolute necessity of gratifying the people by a legislative declaration of Irish rights and constitutional independence—marking out by an indelible record that sacred Rubicon past which the British government should never again advance, and beyond which the Irish nation should never wander.—On that point the fate of Ireland vibrated as on a pivot—it must rise or it must fall—it could no longer remain stationary—and the great landed proprietors strongly felt that they must neces-

sarily participate in its vicissitudes—the court had totally lost its influence—the people had entirely acquired theirs—the old system of Irish government was annihilated—and the British cabinet had neither the wisdom nor the disposition to take the lead in more popular arrangements—the parliament and the people were gradually drawing together against the government—an instinctive sense of the common difficulty called all men towards some common centre—and as that centre, all parties—all sects—and all factions looked to the abilities and the honesty of Mr. Grattan—they knew that he had no object but his country, and no party but its supporters—they knew that his energetic mind could neither be restrained by resistance or neutralised by subterfuge—he possessed all those intellectual qualities best calculated to lead the Irish people to the standard of freedom, without suffering them to advance to the anar- chies of revolution.

His principles democratic by nature, were monarchical by educa- tion—he hated tyranny in the same proportion as he loved constitu- tion—in him ambition for power was merged in ambition for popu- larity—and he acted under the peculiar advantage that if at any time the ardency of his zeal should happen to lead him beyond the boundaries of sound discretion, his wise—weighty—and moderate advisers would always give a steadiness, a safety, and a character, to his views and his proceedings.

It is an observation not unworthy of remark that in describing the

events of that important evening, the structure of the Irish House of Commons at the period of these debates was particularly adapted to convey to the people an impression of dignity and of splendor in their legislative assembly—the interior of the Commons House was a rotunda of great architectural magnificence ; an immense gallery supported by Tuscan pillars surrounded the inner base of a grand and lofty dome—in that gallery on every important debate nearly seven hundred auditors heard the sentiments and learned the characters of their Irish representatives, and the admission of the students of the university gave to the rising generation a love of eloquence and of liberty—taught them the principles of a just and proud ambition—the details of public business—and the rudiments of constitutional legislation.

The front rows of this gallery were generally occupied by females of the highest rank and fashion, whose presence gave an animating and brilliant splendor to the entire scene—and in a nation such as Ireland then was—from which the gallant principles of chivalry had not been altogether banished—contributed not a little to the preservation of that decorum so indispensable to the dignity and weight of deliberative assemblies.

This entire gallery had been crowded at an early hour by personages of the first respectability of both sexes—it would be difficult to describe the interesting appearance of the whole assemblage at this awful moment—after the speech of Mr. Hutchinson—

which in fact decided nothing—a low confidential whisper ran through the house, and every member seemed to court the sentiments of his neighbour without venturing to express his own—the anxious spectators, inquisitively leaning forward, awaited with palpitating expectation the developement of some measure likely to decide the fate of their country—their posterity—no middle course could possibly be adopted—immediate conciliation and tranquillity, or ultimate revolt and revolution, was the dilemma which floated on every thinking mind—a solemn pause ensued—at length Mr. Grattan, slowly rising from his seat, commenced the most luminous—brilliant—and effective oration ever delivered in the Irish parliament.

There is something in the tone, the action, and the emphasis of public speakers which, extrinsic of their arguments, makes great impression—the entire singularity of Mr. Grattan's address—the excentricity of his drawling yet fiery diction, which would have been disadvantageous to another orator, in him only excited a more anxious attention to his language, and acted as an attractive companion to his logic and his eloquence—this speech, ranking in the very first class of effective eloquence, rising in its progress, applied equally to the sense—the pride and the spirit of the nation—every succeeding sentence encreased the interest which his exordium had excited—trampling upon the arrogant claims and unconstitutional usurpations of the British government, he reasoned on the enlightened

principle of a federative compact, and urged irresistibly the necessity—the justice—and the policy of immediately and unequivocally declaring the constitutional independence of the Irish nation, and the supremacy of the Irish parliament, as the only effectual means of preserving the connection between the two nations—his arguments were powerful and conclusive, but they were not original*—it was the very same course of argument which that great Irish statesman, Molyneux, had published near a century before—the same principles on which Swift, the ablest of Irish patriots, had defended his country, and the same which that less able, but not less

* It is a circumstance worthy of observation, that the principal arguments of Mr. Grattan went to establish the same doctrines, and were expressed partly in the very same words, as those of Mr. Molyneux and Dr. Lucas—and that Mr. Grattan's speech was received with universal approbation by parliament, and these principles of Irish independence acceded to by the King's government, and even supported by his law officers, whilst the celebrated book published by Mr. Molyneux, containing the same "claims of Ireland" had been voted a *treasonable* libel by the Irish parliament, when under the influence of the English government, and was ordered to be burned by the hands of the common hangman, which sentence was accordingly executed before the door of the House of Lords, and that Dr. Lucas, for publishing the same principles at a later period, had been voted an *enemy to his country*, and necessitated to fly from Ireland for his safety.

Nothing can more strongly exemplify the dreadful vassalage into which the Irish nation had sunk, or prove the inestimable value of national independence, than the fact that Mr. Grattan gained immortal honour and substantial rewards for the same acts for which his illustrious predecessors had been declared enemies to their country—such are the resulting distinctions of slavery and of freedom.

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“ meeting had spoken this language with the calm and steady voice
 “ of an injured country—that meeting had been considered as
 “ an alarming measure, because it was unprecedented—but it was
 “ an original transaction, and all original transactions must be un-
 “ precedented ;—the attainment of Magna Charta had no precedent,
 “ it was a great original transaction, not obtained by votes in parlia-
 “ ment, but by Barons in the field—to that great original transaction
 “ England owes her liberty—and to the great original transaction at
 “ Dungannon, Ireland will be indebted for hers—the Irish volun-
 “ teers had associated to support the laws and the constitution—the
 “ usurpations of England have violated both, and Ireland has there-
 “ fore armed to defend the principles of the British constitution
 “ against the violations of the British government.—Let other
 “ nations basely suppose that people were made for governments,
 “ Ireland has declared that governments were made for people—and
 “ even crowns, those great luminaries whose brightness they all re-
 “ flect, can receive their cheering fire only from the pure flame of a
 “ free constitution.—England has the plea of necessity for acknow-
 “ ledging the liberties of America—for admitting Irish independence
 “ she has the plea of justice ;—America has shed much English
 “ blood, and America is to be free :—Ireland has shed her own
 “ blood for England, and is Ireland to remain in fetters ?—is Ireland
 “ to be the only nation whose liberty England will not acknowledge,

“and whose affections she cannot subdue?—we have received the
“civic crown from our people, and shall we like slaves lay it down
“at the feet of British supremacy?”

Proceeding in the same glow of language and of reasoning, and amid a general cry of approbation, Mr. Grattan went fully into a detail of Irish rights and grievances, and concluded his statement by moving, as an amendment to Mr. Ponsonby's motion—“That an
“humble address be presented to his Majesty, to return his Majesty
“the thanks of this house for his most gracious message to this
“house, delivered by his Grace the Lord Lieutenant.

“To assure his Majesty of our unshaken attachment to his Majesty's person and government, and of our lively sense of his paternal care in thus taking the lead to administer content to
“his Majesty's subjects of Ireland.

“That thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we shall beg
“leave, with all duty and submission, to lay before his Majesty the
“cause of all our discontents and jealousies; to assure his Majesty
“that his subjects of Ireland are a free people—that the crown of
“Ireland is an imperial crown—inseparably connected with the
“crown of Great Britain, on which connexion the interests and happiness of both nations essentially depend—but that the kingdom
“of Ireland is a distinct kingdom, with a parliament of her own the
“sole legislature thereof—that there is no body of men competent

“ to make laws to bind the nation but the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland—nor any parliament which hath any authority or power of any sort whatever in this country, save only the parliament of Ireland—to assure his Majesty that we humbly conceive that in this right the very essence of our liberty exists—a right which we on the part of all the people of Ireland do claim as their birth right, AND WHICH WE CANNOT YIELD BUT WITH OUR LIVES.”*

The effect of this speech, and the concluding amendment, was instantaneous and decisive—a legislative declaration of independence at once placed the rights and determinations of Ireland on a footing too high to be relinquished without an exterminating contest—the circumstances of both nations were imperative—Ireland was committed and must persist, and Great Britain had lavished in America her powers of resistance.—That haughty government, which in all the arrogance of superior force had for so many centuries lorded over the natural rights and scoffed at the groans of her sister country, at length reached the highest climax of oppression and intolerance—and was necessitated to acknowledge the wrongs and the virtues of that people, and peaceably capitulate to a nation which by honest means it might at any time have conciliated—the whole house in a moment seemed to have caught the patriotic flame—and the outward signs of

* For the entire of this Resolution see the Appendix.

unqualified approbation seemed to issue from every bench of the entire assembly.*

Mr. Grattan had long foreseen the indispensable advantages of a general unanimity on this important day—and wishing to leave no room for that equivocating cavil which the greedy partisans of every government never fail to handle as instruments of adulation and claims for preferments—he appeared to anticipate a well-founded confidence of parliament in the Duke of Portland's administration—though it was impossible to conceal altogether a shade of doubt which seemed to pervade his compliments, and which led him to a strength of language which would have been unnecessary, if not injudicious, if no such doubts had existed—and which could not have been used had his Grace fairly and previously communicated the extent of the concessions he was authorised to accede to.

To go as far as possible in rendering this measure irresistible, Mr. Grattan had selected, to second and support his declaration, a person who gave it as much influence as character and independence could possibly communicate—he was well aware of the great importance which was attributed to the accession of the landed in-

* The author of this work was present at this important scene as a spectator, and the impression it made on his youthful mind, years have not been able in any degree to efface—and he is therefore enabled to delineate the circumstances attending that important event with more than ordinary accuracy.

terest in all parliamentary measures, and he judiciously chose Mr. Brownlow, member for the county of Antrim, as one of the first of the country gentlemen in point of wealth and reputation.

No man could be better adapted to obtain the concurrence of the landed interest than Mr. Brownlow—his own stake in the country was too great to be risked on giddy speculations—his interests were entirely identified with those of the country, and his understanding was too good to be misled one moment by visionary politics—his talents were not rare nor gaudy—but his plain, fair, and liberal, capacity—his mild manners, and substantial judgment, formed the very best composition to attract general confidence, and calm the impulses of a revolutionary moment—and having no courtly connexions to detract from his independence, or aristocratic taints to trifle with his purity—every thing he said, and every measure he supported, carried a certain portion of voluntary influence amongst the country gentlemen—and they often followed his example solely because they could not suspect it.

The great body of the landed proprietors in parliament, generally honest—always prejudiced, refractory and gregarious, caused an eternal courtship and labour to the government—on ordinary occasions it had been found not very difficult to deceive or disunite them :—and even on this day, without such a leader as Mr. Brownlow, the entire unanimity of their opinion or their conduct could by no means be altogether depended on.

After Mr. Grattan had concluded, Mr. Brownlow instantly rose—a general symptom of approbation ran through the house at perceiving so weighty an auxiliary to so decisive a declaration—his example gave countenance to many, and confidence to all—his speech was short, but it was decided, and expressed in such terms as at once determined the country gentlemen to adopt the measure in its fullest extent without further delay, and to pledge their lives and fortunes to the support and establishment of Irish independence—he said, “as he had the honour to second the mover in adversity, he could not avoid maintaining the same honour at a moment of triumph—he had long seen that things must come to this—the people had learned their rights, and they would have them—an end has been proclaimed to temporising expedients—to artful delay, and to political junctions—the people have demanded their rights, and the Irish parliament will support them with their lives and fortunes—he would leave the other side of the house to discuss the subject, and if they were anxious to atone for their past conduct, he would not check the ardor of their patriotism—which, after being so long restrained, seemed ready to burst forth, and he should rejoice in the explosion.—As to the declaration of rights, the Honourable Gentleman would have the eternal gratification of having reared this infant child—his (Mr. Brownlow’s) only merit would be, that, though he could not maintain it with ability, his utmost zeal should be exerted for its support.”

On the conclusion of Mr. Brownlow's speech, another short pause ensued—but it was not a pause of doubt—the measure was obviously decided—the victory was complete—nothing remained in suspense but through whom, and by what species of declaration, the government could submit to so strong a measure—some of the officers of the crown had been the servants of the last administration, and the short period from the arrival of the Duke of Portland had given no time to his cabinet for consideration or concert—the dynasty of diplomatic evasion had ceased to reign—and for the first time in the annals of British history, the officers and ministers of government appeared to be let loose upon the parliament, to recant their principles and capitulate for their characters;—the first they performed, the latter they failed in.—Men may pity the feelings of a vanquished enemy, but they can never securely trust to his compulsory repentance, and they who had expended every day of their political life in upholding the principle of British supremacy, could hardly expect to receive more confidence from the nation than that which belongs to the character of defeated apostates.

Mr. George Ponsonby immediately rose to announce his acquiescence, and, on the part of the Lord Lieutenant, to submit, with as good a grace as the circumstances would admit of, to a proceeding which it was impossible could, in fact, be pleasing to any English ministry—Mr. George Ponsonby had been generally in opposition since the time of his father's disagreement with Lord Townsend,

and his family being entirely attached to the Whig interests of England, the change of ministry naturally brought to the Marquis of Rockingham's administration and aid, the persons who had been so long in opposition to his predecessor.—Mr. Ponsonby's family, of course, connected itself in Ireland with the Duke of Portland, and it was expected that he would have been placed high in confidence under his Grace's administration.

Blending an aristocratic mind with patriotic feelings, and connected with a Viceroy who could himself hardly guess the road he might have to travel, Mr. Ponsonby could not at such a moment be expected to play the full game of popular expectation—extensive and high family connexions, whatever party they espouse in public transactions, ever communicate some tints of their own colouring, and impose some portion of voluntary restraint upon the free agency of public characters—and had Mr. Ponsonby been at this period an isolated man he would certainly have been a more distinguished personage—a nation may sometimes look with confidence to individuals, but they are a credulous people who look with confidence to a party—an individual may be honest—a party never—gregarious integrity would be a phenomenon in politics.—It is the collisions of party, not their visionary virtue, that is advantageous to a people who frequently preserve their rights not through the political purity, but through the rancorous recrimination of ambitious factions.

On this occasion, however, Mr. Ponsonby's steady, judicious, and

plausible address, exactly corresponded with the exigencies of the Viceroy—and gave a tinge of generous concession to his Grace's accedence, which the volatile gratitude of the Irish nation for a moment mistook for genuine sincerity.—Mr. Ponsonby sought to be considered at the same moment as faithful to his country and faithful to its government—a Union which the bad policy of England had taught the Irish people to consider as incompatible—his manner and his speech, however, had the effect intended—his fair and discreet reputation gave great weight to so gratifying a declaration, and no impression could be more favourable to the Duke of Portland than that which he derived from the short conciliating observations of Mr. Ponsonby—he stated, “that he most willingly consented
 “to the proposed amendment, and would answer that the noble
 “Lord who presided in the government of Ireland, wished to
 “do every thing in his power for the satisfaction of the nation, and
 “he knew that the noble Duke would not lose one moment in forwarding this remonstrance of parliament to the Throne, and he
 “would use his utmost influence in obtaining the *rights* of Ireland,
 “an object on which he had FIXED HIS HEART.”*

* Mr. Ponsonby soon after this period acquired the highest legal estimation, and in public affairs connected himself with Mr. Grattan, which connexion has continued to the present day without interruption.

Mr. Ponsonby was one of the most able and distinguished opponents of Lord Castlereagh, on the question of the Irish Union, and always carried a great and just weight in the Irish Parlia-

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Grattan, but as a deliberate senator he was vastly his superior—he knew that all precedent of British cabinets gave just reason to attribute this sudden transition of English policy, not to the feelings of her liberality, but to the extent of her embarrassments, and that the Duke of Portland's having "*set his heart*" upon obtaining the rights of Ireland, was only giving the gloss of voluntary merit to a concession which was in fact a matter of absolute necessity, and without which his Grace foresaw that all British authority in Ireland would be extinguished for ever—Mr. Flood's confidence; therefore, never was implicit.—Mr. Grattan, on the contrary, was deceived by his own zeal, and duped by his own honesty, and his friend Lord Charlemont was too courtly a nobleman to suspect his Grace of such consummate insincerity.*—But Mr. Flood even at that moment did not stand

* The following Resolutions passed immediately before the meeting of parliament, and being followed by the same, or still stronger, from every armed association in Ireland (at that period nearly one hundred thousand disciplined men) taught the Duke of Portland the total impracticability of postponing the claims of Ireland one hour—and the supposed liberality of his Grace's accedence to a declaration of rights could never be justly considered abstractedly as a matter of independent choice—it was impossible, therefore, that his unqualified sincerity could be altogether unquestionable.

The first of these Resolutions were those of the IRISH BAR—a body at THAT TIME of the greatest weight in point of *talent*, *respectability*, and *patriotism*—it gave the tone to the Resolutions of the whole Irish nation—Lord Clare's system commenced, and the extinction of the parliament consummated its dependence.

Those Resolutions were unanimously adopted, some in stronger terms, by all the armed as-

alone in this ungracious incredulity—and ensuing events have fully confirmed the wisdom of his scepticism.*

sociations—See Appendix—in which some most important records of Irish spirit, in the highest orders, will be read with wonder at their subsequent degeneracy.

LAWYER'S CORPS.

At a full Meeting of the Lawyer's Corps, the 28th February, 1782, pursuant to notice,

Colonel EDWARD WESTBY in the Chair,

Resolved, That the Members of the House of Commons are the representatives of, and derive their power *solely* from, the people; and that a denial of this position by them would be to *abdicate the representation*.

Resolved unanimously, That the people of this country are now *called upon* to declare that the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland are the only power competent to make laws to bind this kingdom.

Resolved unanimously, That we do *expect such declaration* of right from our representatives, and that we will support them with OUR LIVES AND FORTUNES in WHATEVER measures may be necessary to render such declaration an *effectual security*.

Resolved, That the above Resolutions be printed.

Signed by order,

SAMUEL ADAMS, Secretary.

At a Meeting of the Corps of Dublin Volunteers, Friday, 1st March, 1782,

His Grace the DUKE OF LEINSTER in the Chair,

Resolved, That the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland only are competent to make laws to bind the subjects of this realm, and that we will not *obey* or give operation to *any* laws save only those enacted by the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, whose *rights and privileges*, jointly and severally, we are determined to support with our *lives and fortunes*.

Signed by order,

JOHN WILLIAMS, Secretary.

* The doubts of Mr. Flood, and the intentions of the Irish Volunteers, seem to be fully exem-

This speech of Mr. Ponsonby's is the more remarkable because it was reserved for the same Mr. Ponsonby, seventeen years afterwards, to expose, in the clearest and most able language, this very duplicity

plified in the following Resolutions, passed THE VERY DAY AFTER this celebrated declaration of rights had passed in parliament.

At a Meeting of the delegates from ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINE Corps of the Volunteers of the Province of Leinster at Dublin, 17th April, 1782,

Colonel HENRY FLOOD in the Chair,

Resolved unanimously, That we feel ourselves *called upon* to declare our satisfaction in the unanimous sense of the HOUSE OF COMMONS expressed in favour of the rights of Ireland, in their address to the King yesterday, as amended by Colonel Grattan, and that we will support them therein with *our lives AND FORTUNES*.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Colonel Grattan, for his extraordinary exertions and perseverance in asserting the rights of Ireland.

Resolved unanimously, That the following thirteen Commanders of Corps be appointed a Standing Committee of Delegates from this province, to correspond and *commune* with all the other provincial Committees or Delegates of Ireland, to wit :

Earl of GRANARD,	Colonel PARNELL,
Earl of ALDBOROUGH,	Captain R. NEVILLE,
Sir W. PARSONS,	Captain GORGE,
Colonel GRATTAN,	Colonel BURTON,
Colonel TALBOT,	Colonel M. LYONS,
Lieut.-Colonel LEE,	Captain SMYTH.
Colonel FLOOD,	

Resolved unanimously, that an officer's guard from each Corps of Volunteers in the city and

of the same Duke of Portland,* and the open avowal of his Grace in seventeen hundred and ninety-nine, that he had "*never*" considered that this concession of England, in seventeen hundred and eighty-two, should be a "*final*" adjustment between the two nations, leaves

county of Dublin be mounted at Lord Charlemont's house, in rotation, at ten o'clock, every morning.

Had there been a general opinion of the Duke of Portland's *sincerity*, the Volunteer Resolutions would have worn a very different aspect.—But this formidable body appeared to think it more necessary than ever to declare their determination, and prepare for sinister events.

It is worthy of observation, that every one of these Delegates ever continued true friends to Irish independence, except *Mr. Richard Neville*, (now member for Wexford town) he afterwards was placed in the treasury office, and supported the Union by his voice;—his influence, talents, or political character, were of no use to it.

Colonel Parnell was afterwards appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland, and held that appointment many years, but instantly surrendered his office when required by Lord Castlereagh to support the Union.

* The Duke of Portland certainly deceived Ireland, either when he was colleague to Lord Rockingham, or he betrayed her when he was servant to Mr. Pitt—it would be difficult to say which was the more dangerous or the more culpable.—If he was deceived *himself* in the *first* instance, his conduct on the latter must have been *voluntary* treachery.

These positions have been unanswerably stated and proved by Mr. Foster, in his speech to the Irish parliament, on the 11th May, 1799, than which nothing was ever more clear—more circumstantial—or better authenticated;—and though in some parts that speech (and another delivered by him in 1800,) does not correspond with the author's idea of the compact then existing between the two nations—they certainly comprised more and better materials than any other arguments ever used against the Union.

no room to doubt his Grace's mental reservation, and the existence of a diplomatic sophistry which the Irish parliament, gulled by their own credulity, and enveloped in a cloud of gratitude and exultation, were at that moment prevented from suspecting.

Mr. Hussey Burgh, and some other members, shortly but zealously supported this declaration of Irish independence—all was unanimity—not a symptom of opposition was manifested—but on the close of the proceeding a circumstance not less remarkable than disgusting unexpectedly occurred.

Mr. John Fitzgibbon, whose indigenuous hostility to the liberties of his country had never omitted any opportunity of opposing its emancipation, on a sudden became metamorphosed—assumed a strange and novel character, and professed himself not only the warmest advocate of Irish freedom, but a deadly and inveterate foe to that very system of British usurpation, the practice of which, till that moment, he had himself been an undeviating and virulent supporter.

Mr. Fitzgibbon's embarrassment in making this declaration was too strong and too new in him to remain unnoticed—the unanimity of the house had left him no room for cavil—his former conduct had left him no room for consistency—his haughty disposition despised neutrality, and his overbearing mind revolted from submission—his stubborn heart, though humiliated, was unsubdued.—But he saw that he was unsupported by his friends, and felt that he was power-

less against his enemies ;—to such a mind the conflict was most dreadful—a sovereign contempt of public opinion was his only solace, and never did he more fully require the aid of that consolation.

This most remarkable of all political recantations that ever appeared in parliamentary transactions was pronounced in the tone of a confirmed patriot, and concluded in words which even those who knew him best had considered, as from him, to have been nearly impossible.—“No man” said Mr. Fitzgibbon with great emphasis, “can say that the Duke of Portland has power to grant us that redress which the nation unanimously demands—but as Ireland is committed, no man, I trust, will shrink from her support, but go through, *hand and heart*, in the establishment of our liberties ;—as I was cautious in committing, so I am now firm in asserting the rights of my country—my declaration, therefore, is, that as the nation has determined to obtain the restoration of her liberty, it behoves every man in Ireland to STAND FIRM.”

The effect produced by this extraordinary speech from a man, the whole tenor of whose public life had been in hostility to its principles, neither added weight to the measure or gained character for the speaker—disgust was the most prevalent sensation, but had he been a less able man, contempt would have been more prominent—all further debate ceased—the Speaker put the question on Mr. Grattan’s amendment ; a unanimous “aye” burst from every quarter of the

house—he repeated the question—the applauses were redoubled—a moment of tumultuous exultation followed—and, after centuries of oppression, Ireland at length declared herself an INDEPENDENT NATION.

This important event quickly reached the impatient crowds of every rank of society, who, without doors, awaited the decision of their parliament—a cry of joy and of exultation spread with electric rapidity through the entire city—its echo penetrated to the very interior of the house—every thing gave way to an effusion of happiness and congratulation that had never before been exhibited in that misgoverned country.

On the house resuming its regularity, Mr. John O'Neil moved an address of thanks to his Grace the Duke of Portland, which was also passed unanimously, and the house was on the point of adjourning, when Mr. Fitzgibbon again offered himself to the Speaker's notice ; —after his former speech, he had sat silently musing in a back seat, haughtily meditating the composition of some new fire-brand—if possible—to interrupt the general unanimity, and somewhat to detract from the great eclat of the moment ; and his exquisite ingenuity suggested the only means by which he could possibly have done mischief.

The Earl of Carlisle,* whatever might have been his friendly dis-

* The Earl of Carlisle, and his then Secretary, (Mr. Eden,) professed strong dispositions to promote the interests of Ireland, but their numerous subterfuges and delays on the Portugal

position towards Ireland, had, during his administration, experienced the opposition of many able and leading men in parliament upon very important questions and radical subjects.—Mr. Fitzgibbon, therefore, well knew that those who had thus opposed Lord Carlisle's administration could not with consistency now accede to a vote of general approbation of that government;—he trusted that they would pertinaciously oppose it, and thus create an ungracious schism at a moment that he dreaded a universal unanimity—he, therefore, without much preface, moved that “the thanks of the house be given to the Earl of Carlisle, for the wisdom and prudence of his administration, and for his uniform and unremitting attention to the welfare of the kingdom.”—It was impossible Mr. Grattan could silently accede to this measure—it was impossible Mr. Flood could accede to it.—Mr. Forbes* also, and Mr. Hartley, (member for

business, and every other important question where the interests of Ireland and of British monopolists came into collision, kept bad pace with their professions.

The Independence of Ireland was a subject neither of them ever countenanced, and they thus secured their consistency in supporting the Union.

* From that hour Mr. Fitzgibbon conceived the most inveterate animosity to Mr. Grattan—for several years it was an intermitting rancour, shewing itself only on special occasions, making a dart at his character, and again retiring before his Lordship's own dread of his adversary's superiority.—But when he found that Mr. Grattan, in 1799, had lost his sting by seceding from parliament, and stood no longer on equal grounds with his Lordship, the House of Lords, the Committees, and the Privy Council, daily witnessed in his Lordship a malevolence more invete-

Dublin) and some others dissented from the address, but their good sense prevented debate or a division—the address passed as a civil compliment on his Lordship's departure.—Mr. Fitzgibbon failed in the mischief of his intentions, and the house adjourned without further observations—the members retiring amidst the plaudits of an unexampled crowd of every class of society.

Ireland from that moment assumed a new aspect—she rose majestically from her ruins, and surveyed the author of her resurrection with admiration and with gratitude.—A young barrister, without professional celebrity—without family connexions—possessed of no considerable fortune, nor of any personal influence, save that which talent and virtue involuntarily acquire—leagued with no faction—supported individually by no political party, became the instrument of Providence to liberate his country—and in a single day achieved what the most able statesmen—the most elevated personages—the most powerful and best connected parties never could effect.—Aided by the circumstances of the moment, he seized the opportunity with promptitude, vigor and perseverance;—but whilst he raised his country to prosperity, and himself to unexpected

rate and persevering than any public character of modern days had ever been known to cherish against another individual; and had the whole Privy Council been as violent as himself, Mr. Grattan would certainly have been in a perilous situation.

On Mr. Grattan's return to parliament in 1800, his Lordship paid dearly for his temporary superiority.

fortune and never-fading honour, he acquired vindictive enemies by the brilliancy of his success, and afterward fell a temporary sacrifice to the perseverance of their malice and the dissimulations of their jealousy.*

Mr. Conolly and Sir Henry Cavendish also, on this night, as ardently supported the independence of Ireland, as if it was a principle engrafted on their nature—both of them had put their signatures to a “life and fortune” declaration, to uphold the perpetual independence of their country—but it will appear in the progress of Irish affairs, how little reliance is to be placed on political declarations, where an alteration of circumstances or connexions so frequently operates as a renunciation of principle.—On the discussion of the Union in the year eighteen hundred, Sir Henry had exchanged the Duke of Devonshire for an employment in the treasury—and a new planet had arisen to influence Mr. Conolly;—in that year both those gentlemen declaimed as conscientiously against the independence of the Irish nation, as if they had never pledged their “lives and fortunes” for their perpetual support of it.

* The Earl of Carlisle, and his Secretary, Mr. Eden, might have had the strongest *English* disposition to promote the commercial interests of Ireland, but the numerous subterfuges and procrastinations on the Portugal business, and on every other important commercial concern where the advantages of Irish trade and the interests of the British manufacturers came at all in contact; gave no incontestable proof of his Lordship's disinterested zeal for the abstract interest of the nation he presided over.

It was impossible for any uninterested observer of the character and composition of the Irish parliament to have conceived that the apparent unanimity of this night could have arisen from any one principle of universal action—men were actuated by various motives forming a mixed composition of patriotism and of policy ;—it was the unanimous firmness of the people, and not the abstract virtue of their delegates, which achieved this revolution—nor is it possible to read some of the popular resolutions of that day without feeling admiration at the happy union of spirit, of patriotism, and of prudence, which characterized their proceedings.*

On Mr. Fitzgibbon's motion, Mr. John Toler, also a gentleman who afterwards acquired great notoriety in Irish transactions, took his usual recreation of eulogizing the Earl of Carlisle and numerous other Lord Lieutenants, their Secretaries, and the respective British governments from whom they had emanated.

In the offices of Serjeant, Solicitor, and Attorney-General, which

* When on Earl Fitzwilliam's arrival in Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, it was supposed that his Lordship would have made a clear stage of the old officers of the Irish government, and in which arrangement, of course, Mr. Toler would not have been excepted, a scene of unexampled despondency and dismay pervaded that whole circle—Mr. Toler alone appeared to take his reverse with the greatest hilarity and good humour—he never omitted a joke to state a grievance—and it was supposed he would have worked out for himself a better compensation in proportion to his pretensions than any of his official brethren, who were complaining without cessation of the Viceroy's purity.

he afterward enjoyed, Mr. Toler was many years an ostensible actor in some of the most interesting scenes of Ireland :—and in the year eighteen hundred consummated his own objects, and aided in the extinction of the Irish nation.—On this night, however, he confined himself judiciously to the praises of Viceroys, and left the declaration of Independence to wrestle with the compunction of more important proselytes.

He had not yet been armed with that official importance which in after times distinguished and exhibited his qualities—but as a personage whose conspicuous conduct must form numerous episodes in the detail of subsequent transactions, it may not be digressive to introduce him, at an anticipating period, to the contemplative reader of Irish history.

Without any prolix pedigrees, or hereditary importance, Mr. Toler, at a very early period of life, was introduced into circles of the best society—he was called to the Irish bar in seventeen hundred and seventy, and shewed no inconsiderable portion of forensic activity, and fugitive talent.

No man could be better suited to the humour of those days than Mr. Toler—and no man ever availed himself more expertly of his opportunities—he followed the court because it was more productive than the people ;—but, if the profits had been in equipoise, he would probably have been a patriot—spirited, civilized, and vivacious—convivial without dissipation—witty without sentiment—and

thoughtless without forgetting himself—he was admirably adapted to the outside business of the Irish government—Philippic and eulogium were the weapons of his advancement, and he fought his way with wonderful dexterity;—the one he brandished to keep enemies at a distance—with the other he hooked in superficial friendships;—both of them were exercised with unremitting activity, and his warfare was successful beyond all example—his habits wrought him no material injury, and his address he managed with indescribable ingenuity—he affected importance without assuming its austerity—and a factitious arrogance was neutralised by a natural good nature—though his mind was not compact, he had no lofty genius to distract its operations.—But his restless ideas eternally combining, and eternally diverging, drove into his thoughts a variety of images at the same moment—and at that period of his life, never did he make a display of his variegated talents where the courtier and the countryman—the laywer and the sportsman—the adventurer and the gentleman—might not fancy that they perceived some reflection of themselves in his universal mirror.

An excellent temper rescued him from innumerable difficulties—and a ranging memory filled up the blanks of a less copious information—his private ebullitions were struggles for wit, and his speeches in parliament were samples of every thing—his temporary displeasure created no great pain, and his transitory favor yielded no great importance.

He learned the world more by rote than by reflection, and occasionally lost the benefit of his knowledge by overacting its maxims—but he ever conformed himself to political vicissitudes with an accommodating gaiety beyond the skill of all his contemporaries*—his political elevation is better accounted for by a list of qualities and an index of variety, than by a reference to those means through which public characters had theretofore ascended.

With an inexhaustible cheerfulness—an external zeal—an internal egotism—and a tumultuous crowd of accommodating and heterogeneous conceptions, Mr. Toler sprung into the Irish parliament

* The following address of the Dungannon convention to the members of parliament who had voted in the minorities in seventeen hundred and eighty-one, and the beginning of seventeen hundred and eighty-two, is extremely illustrative of their temper and firmness, and made a very deep impression on the public mind.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

We thank you for your noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual, efforts in defence of the great constitutional rights of your country.—Go on—go on—the almost unanimous voice of your country is with you—and in a free country the voice of the people must prevail.—We know our duty to our Sovereign and are loyal.—We know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free.—We seek for our rights, and no more than our rights—and in so just a pursuit we should doubt the being of a Providence if we doubted of success."

This was strictly constitutional language, because it was addressed to a portion of one constitutional body—the parliament—by another constitutional body—their individual constituents—and to promote a constitutional object, very different from the frantic *ça iras* of France—the applauses of one mob for the brutalities of another.

as a person whom every body predicted would be a most useful and prosperous partizan—his speech on this night concluded the debate.

When the intelligence of these events were circulated through the nation, the joy and rejoicings of the people were beyond all description—every city, town, and village, in Ireland, blazed with the emblems of exultation, and resounded with the shouts of triumph—the volunteers, however, were not dazzled by the sunshine of the moment—they became rather more active than more remiss;—much indeed was faithfully promised, but still every thing remained to be actually performed—and it soon appeared, that human life is not more uncertain in its duration than political faith precarious in its sincerity—the fair intentions of one government are generally called at least injudicious by its successors—political honesty has often vegetated in British Councils—but never yet did it survive to the period of maturity—and the short existence of the Duke of Portland's splendid administration warranted the cautious suspicion of the volunteers, and afforded the succeeding ministry an opportunity for attempting those insidious measures which soon afterwards characterized anew the disposition of the British cabinet.

The parliament, and the people, when the paroxysm of their joy had subsided, waited with some solicitude for the King's reply to the Declaration of their Independence, and a general suspension of public business took place until its arrival.—It was, however, the first pause of confidence and tranquillity that Ireland had experi-

enced since her connexion with Great Britain ;—little could she then foresee that her new prosperity was but the precursor of future evils and of scenes as cruel and as destructive as any she had ever before experienced.—The seeds of the Irish Union were sowed by the very same event which had procured her independence—so early as seventeen hundred and eighty-four that independence was insidiously assailed by a despotic minister under color of a commercial tariff—in seventeen hundred and eighty-seven events connected with the malady of the Monarch and the firm adherence of the Irish parliaments to the constitutional rights of the Heir Apparent determined the same minister in the fatal project of extinguishing the Irish legislature—and in seventeen hundred and ninety-eight a rebellion artificially permitted, to terrify the country—and followed by acts and scenes of unparalleled corruption—for a moment warped away the minds of men from the exercise of common reason, and gave power and pretence to the British cabinet to effect that extinguishment at a moment of national derangement.

From this determination of the British minister the events of Ireland rise in quick succession—through these events the reader will wander as if through romance or fiction, till the catastrophe of eighteen hundred shall, by its example, give an instructive lesson to the caution of Great Britain, and close the varied and disgraceful history of the Irish nation.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

APPENDIX

TO

FIRST VOLUME.

No. I.

CLONLONAN VOLUNTEERS.

At a Meeting of the Clonlonan Light Infantry at Moate, 16th April, 1782,

COLONEL G. CLIBBORNE IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED—That the only power of enacting Laws to bind this Kingdom, is vested in the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland only; and that we will not submit to the execution of any, except such as have received that Constitutional sanction.

N. B.—Colonel Clibborne was seduced on the subject of Union.

No. II.

MUNSTER VOLUNTEERS.

At a Meeting of Delegates from Eighty-six of the Volunteer Corps of the Province of Munster, at Mallow, the 2d May, 1782,

LORD KINGSBOROUGH CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE.

RESOLVED unanimously—That we are determined to support, with our lives and fortunes, our Houses of Parliament, in their late virtuous efforts to establish the rights and privileges of this realm.

No. III.

At a full Meeting of different Volunteer Corps of the City of Waterford, the Cavalry Artillery No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, assembled by public notice on the 3rd day of March, 1782.

CAPTAIN HANNIBAL W. DOBBYN IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED unanimously—That the Members of the House of Commons are the representatives of the People, and that a denial of this position by them would be to abdicate the representation.

RESOLVED unanimously—That we conceive the people of this country are now called upon to declare, that the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make Laws to bind this realm.

RESOLVED unanimously—That we do expect such declaration of rights from our representatives in Parliament, and that we will support them with our *lives and fortunes* in whatever measures may be necessary to render such declaration an effectual security.

No. IV.

We, the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the County of Westmeath, at a General Assizes held at Mullingar, in and for the said County, the 4th day of March, 1782.

RESOLVED unanimously—That the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make Laws to bind this realm.

THAT we do think now absolutely necessary to declare, that the Members of the House of Commons of Ireland, in Parliament assembled, are the representatives of, and derive their power solely from, the people.

THAT we do think it highly necessary for the representatives of the people to demand a speedy declaration of the rights of this Kingdom.

THAT as it is the undoubted right of free and independent electors to instruct their representatives, so it is the duty of representatives faithfully to speak the sense of the people.

No. V.

At a Meeting of the Corps of Independent Dublin Volunteers, held at the Eagle, in Eustace-street, Dublin, on Tuesday, March 5th, 1782,

MAJOR CANNIER IN THE CHAIR.

WHEREAS the people of Ireland are a free people, with a Parliament of their own, to whose authority alone they are subject; now we, the Corps of

INDEPENDENT DUBLIN VOLUNTEERS,

associated for the defence of the Realm, the Law, and the Constitution, do agree unanimously to the following resolutions, for the rule of our conduct:

RESOLVED—That we do not acknowledge a Parliament save only the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.

RESOLVED—That we will in every capacity oppose the execution of any Statute imposed on us by the pretended authority of the British Parliament.

RESOLVED—That we will support, with our lives and fortunes, the Parliament of Ireland, in declaring and asserting its rights.

Signed by Order,

S. CANNIER, Chairman.

No. VI.

At a Meeting of the Grand Jury and Freholders of the County of Meath, convened by the Sheriff, on Thursday, the 7th of March, 1782, held at Trim, the following

Resolutions were unanimously agreed to :

RESOLVED unanimously—That no power on Earth can make Laws to bind the People of this Land, but the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.

RESOLVED—That the Members of the House of Commons are the representatives of, and derive their power solely from, the people; and that a denial of this position by them would be to abdicate the representation.

No. VII.

COUNTY OF WATERFORD.

At a Meeting of the Grand Jury of said County, at the General Assizes held at Blackfriars, in said County, the 8th day of March, 1782.

RESOLVED—That the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland are the only power competent to make Laws to bind this realm.

RESOLVED—That we will support the representatives of the People, with our lives and fortunes, in whatever measures may be necessary to render the above declaration effectual.

Signed, by Order of the Grand Jury,

JOHN BERESFORD, Foreman.

N. B.—Mr. Beresford became afterwards the undeviating supporter of all Irish and English governments, with almost all his family and connexions;—was not, however, considered as a friend to the *Union*—in it he foresaw the end of his own importance—it was not his *will* that consented.

No. VIII.

GOLDSMITH'S CORPS, .

Commanded by the Right Hon. the Earl of CHARLEMONT, associated in defence OF THIS KINGDOM AND ITS NATURAL RIGHTS, have unanimously agreed to the following

Resolutions:

RESOLVED—That we will not acknowledge the jurisdiction of any Parliament, save only the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland; and that we will, in every capacity, support them with our lives and fortunes, in asserting our rights against any pretended authority of the British Parliament.

J. HARDY, Secretary.

N. B.—Mr. Hardy afterward became a very respectable and honest member of the Irish Parliament; and on the succession of the Duke of Bedford to the Lord Lieutenancy, was appointed *Commissioner of Appeals*—an office very inadequate to his undeviating honesty, and faithful adherence at all times to the interests of Ireland.

No. IX.

COUNTY OF WATERFORD MEETING.

At a numerous Meeting of the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Waterford, assembled at Dungarvan, on Monday, the 18th day of March, 1782, pursuant to notice given by the High Sheriff for that purpose.

ROBERT UNIACKE, ESQ. HIGH SHERIFF, IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED—That the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make Laws to bind this Kingdom.

RESOLVED—That we will support the representatives of the People *with our lives and fortunes*, in whatever measures may be necessary to render the foregoing declarations effectual.

RESOLVED—That the High Sheriff be requested to have the above Resolutions inserted in the public papers.

ROBERT UNIACKE, HIGH SHERIFF.

N. B.—Mr. Uniacke, on the question of Union, not only recanted all his former declarations and principles, but became the most vociferous and indefatigable supporter of that measure—in and out of doors he never ceased his exertions.—He was at times stationed at the back door entrance into the House of Commons, to let members in or out as *circumstances required*—an office to which his bodily strength and vigour was particularly adapted—that gentleman will appear of course very conspicuous in a detail of that proceeding.

No. X.

COUNTY FERMANAGH GRAND JURY.

We, the Grand Jury of the County Fermanagh, being constitutionally assembled at this present Assizes, held for the County Fermanagh, at Enniskillen, this 18th day of March, 1782,

THINK ourselves called upon at this interesting moment, to make our solemn declarations relative to the rights and liberties of Ireland.

WE pledge ourselves to this our Country, that we will never pay obedience to any Law made, or to be made to bind Ireland, except those Laws which are, and shall be made by the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.

Signed by Order,

ARTHUR C. HAMILTON.

No. XI.

BALTINGLASS MEETING.

At a meeting of the Delegates, assembled at Baltinglass, pursuant to public notice, on the 20th day of March, 1782,

THE EARL OF ALDBOROUGH IN THE CHAIR.

THE following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to:

Z Z

THAT we are determined to resist, *with our lives and fortunes*, the operation of any Law that is dictated by a foreign Legislature, as we know, and will acknowledge no other, but that of the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.

ALDBOROUGH, Chairman.

N. B.—Lord Aldborough never varied.

No. XII.

BIRR MEETING

*At a Meeting of the Delegates from Seventeen Corps of Volunteers, assembled at Birr,
the 20th of March, 1782,*

SIR WILLIAM PARSONS, BART. IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED—That Ireland is an Independent Kingdom, and can only be governed by Laws enacted by the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.

N. B.—His son, Sir Lawrence Parsons, was afterward one of the ablest opponents of the Union—he has since accepted of office, and has become neutralized.

No. XIII.

*At a Meeting of all the Volunteer Corps of the County and City of Limerick, 22nd
March, 1782,*

MAJOR CROKER IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED unanimously—That the Members of the House of Commons are the representatives of, and derive their power solely from, the people; and that to act contrary to the general sense of their constituents would be to deny this position.

RESOLVED unanimously—That the assertion, that power constitutes right, is repugnant to every principle of law, reason, and common sense.

No. XIV.

*At a Meeting of the Nobility, Representatives, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the
County of Tyrone, at Omagh, convened by the Sheriff, the 22nd March, 1782,
the following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to:*

THE RIGHT HON. LORD BELMORE IN THE CHAIR.

WE the Nobility, Representatives, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the County Tyrone do declare, that we will, in every situation of life, and with all the means in our power, assert and maintain the constitutional rights of this Kingdom, to be governed by such Laws as are enacted by the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland; and that

we will in every instance uniformly and strenuously oppose the execution of any statutes, except such as derive authority from said Parliament, pledging ourselves to our country, and to each other, to support with our *lives and fortunes*, this our solemn declaration; and further, we bind ourselves, that we will at all times renew this necessary vindication of our rights, till such time as they shall be explicitly acknowledged and *firmly established* by the authority of Parliament.

Signed by Order,

BELMORE, Chairman.

N. B.—Lord Belmore never deviated from his principles—and his son, Lord Corry, will appear a very prominent opposer of the Union—and on all occasions a supporter of the rights and interests of his country.

No. XV.

COUNTY OF WEXFORD MEETING.

ENNISCORTHY LIGHT DRAGOONS.

*At a Meeting of the Enniscorthy Light Dragoons, held at Enniscorthy, Saturday, 23rd
March, 1782.*

CAPTAIN CHARLES DAWSON IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED unanimously—That any Laws made to bind this Kingdom, by any other power except the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are unconstitutional and a grievance.

THAT therefore, any Member who does not, upon all occasions, pay implicit obedience to the instructions of his constituents, is a betrayer of the trust reposed in him, and abdicates the representation.

No. XVI.

COUNTY OF DUBLIN.

At a Meeting of the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the County of Dublin, at the Court-House, at Kilmainham, on Thursday, the 11th April, 1782,

THOMAS BAKER, ESQ. FOREMAN, IN THE CHAIR.

THE following Resolutions were agreed to:

THAT no power on earth, but the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, can in right make Laws to bind Ireland.

THAT the Members of the House of Commons derive their power solely from the people; and that a denial of this position by them would be to abdicate the representations.

No. XVII.

RAKENNY VOLUNTEERS.

At a Meeting of the Rakenny Independent Volunteers, the 12th of April, 1782,

COL. THEOPHILUS CLEMENTS IN THE CHAIR.

THE following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to :

THAT the Members of the House of Commons derive their power solely from the people ; and as such, are in duty bound, upon every momentous question, to ask for, and obey the instructions of their Constituents.

THAT the Representative *only*, who obeys the instructions of his Constituents, and not the mandates of the *Minister*, is entitled worthy of our esteem and support.

Signed,

THEOPHILUS CLEMENTS.

No. XVIII.

COUNTY OF DUBLIN LIGHT DRAGOONS.

At a Meeting of the County of Dublin Light Dragoons, on Parade, the 14th of April,

1782,

THE RIGHT HON. LUKE GARDINER, COL. IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED unanimously—That the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make Laws to bind this Kingdom.

RESOLVED unanimously—That until the indisputable rights of the different branches of the Legislature of this Kingdom be fully recognised, *harmony between Great Britain and Ireland can never be established.*

RESOLVED—That any man, or body of men, in either Kingdom, who at this crisis can hesitate at a recognition of our rights, must be considered as holding sentiments tending to separate Great Britain and Ireland, and inimical to the tranquility of both countries.

No. XIX.

At a Meeting of the Ouzle Galley, at Dublin, 16th April, 1782.

THEOPHILUS THOMPSON, CAPTAIN, IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED—That the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are solely competent to make Laws for the Government thereof; and that we *will never pay obedience* to any Laws, save only such as have, or may receive their sanction.

No. XX.

At Lent Assizes, March 30th, 1782.

WE, the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the County of Carlow, assembled, think the duty we owe to our Country and ourselves calls upon us to declare,

THAT the Members of the House of Commons are the representatives of, and derive their power solely from, the people; and that to act contrary to the sense of their Constituents, would be to deny this proposition.

THAT the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only powers competent to make Laws to bind this Kingdom; and that every attempt by any other body of men, to exercise this right, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.

Signed,

RICHARD MERCER, Sheriff.

ROBERT POWER, Foreman.

No. XXI.

COUNTY OF LIMERICK.

WE, the Grand Jury of the County of Limerick, at Spring Assizes, 1782, assembled, think the duty we owe to our Country and ourselves, makes it indispensably necessary for us to declare,

THAT the Members of the House of Commons derive their power solely from,

are the only representatives of the people; and that a denial of this position would be to abdicate the representation.

THAT the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make laws to bind this Kingdom; and that every attempt of any other body to usurp such right, is subversive of constitutional liberties, illegal, and a grievance.

THAT we do abhor and execrate the odious principle, that power makes right; and rejoice the public spirit of our brave volunteers prevents men, who dare advance such despotic maxims, from carrying them into execution.

* HUGH MASSY,	WILLIAM FITZGERALD,
* WILLIAM ODELL,	WILLIAM WILSON,
* HUGH MASSY, JUN.	RICHARD TAYLOR.

N. B.—The three first gentlemen afterwards relinquished every one of the principles which these Resolutions so strongly asserts. Col. Odell in particular, who has been placed in office, in consequence of his accordation on the question of Union—these gentlemen will be subjects of very particular observation in a subsequent part of this work.

No. XXII.

CITY OF KILKENNY.

WE, the Grand Jury of the County of the City of Kilkenny, at Spring Assizes,

1782, assembled, conscious that every citizen, who wishes to support the glorious cause of freedom, should at this critical juncture declare his sentiments, have unanimously entered into the following Resolutions :—

THAT the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power that have any right to make Laws to bind Ireland; and that we will resist, to the utmost of our power, the operation of any other Laws.

THAT the Members of the House of Commons are the representatives of the people; and that such Members as support measures contrary to the opinion of their Constituents, betray the trust reposed in them.

No. XXIII.

COUNTY OF KILKENNY.

*At a Meeting of the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the County Kilkenny, at Lent
Assizes, 1782, present,*

JAMES KEARNEY, Sheriff.

THOMAS BOYCE,

H. BLUNTT, Foreman.

GEORGE AGAR,

JOHN BUTLER,	HON. P. BUTLER,
SIR. R. ST. GEORGE, BART.	JOHN FLOOD,
GERVASE BUSHE,	JAMES WEMYSS,
EDWARD HUNT,	P. WALSHE,
R. W. D. CUFFE,	BENJAMIN KEARNEY,
B. MORRIS,	R. SNOW,
ELAND MOSSOM,	LUKE ROCHE,
JOHN MITCHELL,	CLAYTON BAYLEY,
R. LOWER,	HENRY LA RIVE,
FRANCIS FLOOD.	

WE do declare for ourselves, that we do deny the authority of the British Parliament to make Laws to bind this Kingdom; and that we will *resist* the execution of any laws so made, and that we are ready to support our Parliament in declaring its exclusive rights with our lives and fortunes.

No. XXIV.

At a Meeting of the Castle Durrow Light Dragoons, pursuant to adjournment 1st of April, 1782, to appoint a Major;

LIEUT. COL. RIDGE IN THE CHAIR.

WHEN John Barrington, of Castlewood, Esq. was unanimously chosen Major, vice Ridge.

RESOLVED unanimously—That we are ready, with our *lives and fortunes*, to co-operate with every Volunteer Corps, to obtain the Constitutional rights and liberties of *our Country*.—

No. XXV.

MOUNTMELICK VOLUNTEERS.

At a Meeting of said Volunteers, at Mountmelick, April 1st, 1782.

LORD VISCOUNT CARLOW IN THE CHAIR.

RESOLVED unanimously—That the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power who have any right to make Laws to bind the subjects of this Kingdom; and that we will resist, to the utmost of our power, and not *obey* nor give operation to any Laws, except those enacted by them.

No. XXVI.

CLARE MEETING.

At a general Meeting of Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Clare, convened by the High Sheriff, at Ennis, April 6th, 1782,

POOLE HICKMAN, Esq., HIGH SHERIFF, IN THE CHAIR.

THE following Resolutions were unanimously adopted :

THAT it appears to us absolutely necessary to declare, that no *power on earth* has any right to make Laws to bind this Kingdom, save only the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.

THAT it is at this time absolutely necessary that the Irish Parliament should enact a Law, *declaratory of their sole and exclusive* right to make Laws to bind Ireland.

No. XXVII.

CITY OF CORK.

WE, the Grand Jury of the County of the City of Cork, at Spring Assizes, assembled, do declare, that it is the undoubted privilege and unalienable right of a free people, to make Laws for themselves, and to be bound by such Laws only.

THAT the exercise of the power of Legislation, by any foreign Legislature, is *degrading to the Country* over which it is exerted, subversive of its liberties, calculated to break down *the spirit of its people*, and sufficient to reduce a great Kingdom to the contemptible situation of a tributary province.

THAT the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the Legislature thereof, and competent solely, and in exclusion of every power upon earth, to make Laws to bind this Kingdom; and that every attempt by any other body of men to exercise this right ought to be resisted.

No. XXVIII.

DECLARATION OF IRISH RIGHTS,

MOVED BY

Mr. Grattan,

AND RESOLVED NEM. CON.

IN THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS,

16th April, 1782, (*See page 311.*)

RESOLVED—That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to return his Majesty the thanks of this House, for his most gracious message to this House, signified by his Grace the Lord Lieutenant.

To assure his Majesty of our unshaken attachment to his Majesty's person and government; and of our lively sense of his paternal care, in thus taking the lead to administer content to his Majesty's subjects of Ireland.

THAT thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before his Majesty the cause of our discontents and jealousies, To assure his Majesty, that his subjects of Ireland are a free people; that the Crown of Ireland is an imperial Crown, inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great Britain, on which connexion, the interests and happiness of both Countries essentially depend; but that the Kingdom of Ireland is a distinct Kingdom, with a Parliament of her own, the sole Legislature thereof; that there is no body of men competent to make Laws to bind this Nation, except the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland; nor any other Parliament which hath any authority or power of any sort whatever in this Country, save only the Parliament of Ireland.

To assure his Majesty, that we humbly conceive, that in this right, the very essence of our liberty exists, a right, which we, on the part of all the people of Ireland, do claim as their birth-right, and which we cannot yield but with our lives.

To assure his Majesty, that we have seen with concern, certain claims, advanced by the Parliament of Great Britain, in an act entitled, An Act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland—an act containing matter entirely irreconcilable to the fundamental rights of this nation, That we conceive this act, and the claims it advances, to be the great and principal cause of the discontents and jealousies in this Kingdom,

To assure his Majesty, that his Majesty's commons of Ireland do most sincerely wish, that all bills which become Law in Ireland, should receive the approbation of his Majesty, under the great seal of Britain; but that yet we do consider the practice of stopping our Bills in the Councils of Ireland, or altering them any where to be another just cause of discontent and jealousy.

To assure his Majesty, that an act entitled, An Act for the better accommodation of his Majesty's forces, being unlimited in duration, and defective in other instances, but passed in that shape from the particular circumstances of the times, is another just cause of discontent and jealousy in this Kingdom.

THAT we have submitted these, the principal causes of the present discontent and jealousy of Ireland, and remain in humble expectation of redress.

THAT we have the greatest reliance on his Majesty's wisdom, the most sanguine expectations from his virtuous choice of a Chief Governor, and great confidence in the wise, auspicious, and Constitutional Councils which we see with satisfaction his Majesty has adopted.

THAT we have moreover a high sense and veneration for the British character, and do therefore conceive, that the proceedings of this country, founded as they are in right, and tempered by duty, must have excited the approbation and esteem, instead of wounding the pride, of the British nation. And we beg leave to assure his Majesty that we are the more confirmed in this hope, inasmuch as the people of this kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the Freedom of England, without a determination to share her fate likewise, standing and falling with the British Nation.



Engraved by J. Heath from an original painting by G. Kneller in possession of Sir J. Barrington

JOHN FITZGIBBON, EARL of CLARE.

Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

Published Sept 1st 1809. by G. Robinson Paternoster Row London.



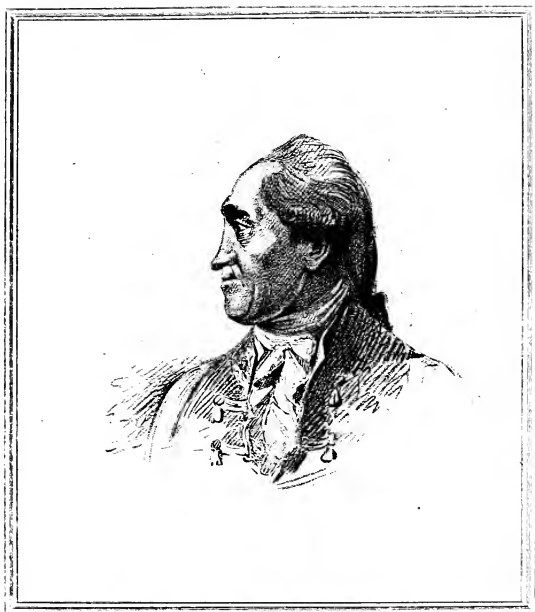
Engraved by J. Heath from an original painting by Hamilton in possession of Sir John M. Currier Bart

THE RIGHT HON^{BLE} HUSSEY BURGH.



Engraved by J. Heath from an original Sculpture by T. S. in possession of Sir John Barrington

ROBERT EMMET ESQ^R



Engraved by James Heath from a Drawing by Cornetford in possession of Surgeon Barrington.

RIGHT HON^{BLE} HENRY FLOOD.

Published March 1 1811 by C. Robinson, Paternoster Row, London.



Engraved by Smith from an original Drawing by Gainsborough in possession of the Earl of Barrington.

R^T HON^{BLE} HENRY GRATTAN.



Engraved by J. Watts from an Original Painting by Hamilton in Possession of the Earl of Charlemont

JAMES EARL OF CHARLEMONT

Published June 1. 1866 by C. Robinson, Tottenham, & New York



Engraved by Heath from an original Drawing by J. R. M. in the possession of Sir J. Barrington.

FRANCIS HARDY ESQ^R



Wright del.

Smith sculp.

DUKE OF LEINSTER.

Engraved March 1794 by C. J. Pine. For master, Ben. Lister.



Engraved by Heath from an original Picture by Hamilton in possession of the late Mr. Duke of Devon

LORD EDW^d FITZGERALD.

Published Sept^r 1st 1809 by C. Johnson, Stationer, No. 1. London.



Engraved by J. Heath from a Drawing by J. Flaxman in the possession of Sir Joseph Burdett

JAMES NAPPER TANDY ESQ^R

Printed by J. Smith at the Printing Office, No. 1, St. Martin's Lane, London



Engraved by J. Heath from a Drawing from life by Commaford in the possession of Sir Jonah Barrington.

RT HON^{BLE} JOHN, LORD DE BLACQUIERE, K.B.

Published Aug^r 1822 by G. Robinson, Paternoster Row London



Wright del.

Smith sculp.

EARL OF GRANARD.

Engraved from a portrait by G. Romney. Published by J. Smith.



Engraved by J. Heath from an original painting by Hamilton in possession of the Earl of Moira

FRANCIS RAWDON, EARL OF MOIRA.

Published Sept. 1st 1809 by C. Robinson 25 Paternoster Row London



Engraved by H. Wall from an original Drawing by Peter in the possession of the Admiralty

MAJOR GENERAL MONTAGUE MATTHEW



ARTHUR O'CONNOR.



Engraved by A. Smith, from a drawing from life by G. Kneller, in the possession of R. A. P. Esq.

HUMPHREY BUTLER ESQ^R

Published Aug^r 1782, by G. Robinson, Paternoster Row London

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